

RANDOM KNOWLEDGE 15



The Sisters, 1884 by Abbott H. Thayer (American, 1849-1921).
Oil on canvas, 54 5/16 x 36 1/4 in. Brooklyn Museum,
Bequest of Bessie G. Stillman, 35.1068

CAR POOL

By Rosel George Brown

*_Certainly alien children ought
to be fed ... but to human kids?_*

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"Happy birthday to _you_," we all sang, except Gail, of course, who was still screaming, though not as loud.

"Well, now," I said jovially, glancing nervously about at the other air traffic, "what else can we all sing?" The singing seemed to be working nicely. They had stopped swatting each other with their lunch boxes and my experienced ear told me Gail was by this time forcing herself to scream. This should be the prelude to giving up and enjoying herself.

"_Boing_ down in Texas in eighteen-ninety," Billy began, "Davy, _Davy_ Eisenhower...."

"A-B- _C-D_-E--" sang Jacob.

"Dere was a little 'elicopter red and blue," Meli chirped, "flew along de air-ways--"

The rest came through unidentifiably.

"Ba-ba-ba," said a faint voice. Gail had given up. I longed for ears in the back of my head because victory was mine and all I needed to do was reinforce it with a little friendly conversation.

"Yes, dear?" I asked her encouragingly.

"Ba-ba-ba," was all I could make out.

"Yes, indeed. That Gail _likes_ to go to Playplace."

"Ba-ba-ba!" A little irritable. She was trying to say something important. "_Ba-ba-ba!_"

I signaled for an emergency hover, turned around and presented my ear.

"Me eat de crus' of de toas'," Gail said. She beamed.

I beamed.

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We managed to reach Playplace without incident, except for a man who called me an obscenity. The children and I, however, called him a great, big alligator head and on the whole, I think, we won. After all, how can a man possibly be right when faced with a woman and eight tiny children?

I herded the children through the Germ Detection Booth and Gail was returned to me with an incipient streptococcus infection.

"Couldn't you give her the shot here?" I asked. "I've _just_ got her in a good mood, and if I have to turn around and take her back home ... and besides, her mother works. There won't be anyone there."

"Verne, dear, we can't risk giving the shot until the child is perfectly adjusted to Playplace. You see, she'd connect the pain of the shot with coming to school and then she might never adjust." Mrs. Baden managed to give me her entire attention and hold a two-and-a-half-year-old child on one shoulder and greet each entering child and break up a fight between two ill-matched four-year-olds, all at the same time.

"Me stay at school," Gail said resolutely.

There was a scream from the other side of the booth. That was Billy's best friend. I waited for the other scream. That was Billy.

"Normal aggression," Mrs. Baden said with a smile.

I picked up Gail. Act first, talk later.

"Oh, _there_ she is," Mrs. Baden said, taking my elbow with what could only be a third hand.

Having heard we'd have a Hiserean child in Billy's group, I managed not to look surprised.

"Mrs. His-tara, this is Verne Barrat. Her Billy will be in Hi-nin's group."

I was immediately frozen with indecision. Should I shake hands? Merely smile? Nod? Her hands looked wavery and boneless. I might injure them inadvertently.

I settled on a really good smile, all the way back to my bridge. "I am so delighted to meet you," I said. I felt as though the good will of the entire World Conference rested on my shoulders.

Her face lighted up with the most sincere look of pleasure I've ever seen. "I am glad to furnish you this delight," she said, with a good deal of lisping over the dentals, because Hisereans have fore-shortened teeth. She embraced me wholeheartedly and gave me a scaly kiss on the cheek.

My first thought was that I was a success and my second thought was, Oh, God, what'll happen when Billy gets hold of little Hi-nin? Hisereans, as I understood it, simply didn't have this "normal aggression." Indeed, I sometimes have trouble believing it's really normal.

"I was thinking," Mrs. Baden said, putting down the two-and-a-half-year-old and plucking a venturesome little girl in Human Fly Shoes from the side of the building, "that you all might enjoy having Hi-nin in your car pool."

"Oh, we'd love to," I said eagerly. "We've got five mamas and eight children already, of course, but I'm sure everyone--"

"It would trouble you!" Mrs. His-tara exclaimed. Her eye stalks retracted and tears poured down her cheeks. "I do not want to be of difficulty," she said.

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Since she had no apparent handkerchief and wore some sort of permanent-looking native dress, I tore a square out of my paper morning dress for her.

"You are too good!" she sobbed, fresh tears pouring out.

"No, no. I already tore out two for the children. I always get my skirts longer in cold weather because children are so careless about carrying--"

"Then we'll consider the car pool settled?" Mrs. Baden asked, coming in tactfully.

"Naturally," I said, mentally shredding my previous sentence. "We would feel so honored to have Hi-nin--"

"Do not think of putting yourself out. We do not have a helicopter, of course, but Hi-nin and I can so easily walk."

I was rapidly becoming unable to think of anything at all because Gail was trying to use me for a merry-go-round and I kept switching her from hand to hand and I could hear her beginning to build up the ba-bas.

"My car pool," I said, "would be terribly sad to think of Hi-nin walking."

"You would?"

"_Terribly._"

"In such a case--if it will give you pleasure for me to accept?"

"It would," I said fervently, holding Gail under one arm as she was beginning to kick.

And on the way home all the second thoughts began.

I would be glad to have Hi-nin in the car pool. Four of the other mamas were like me, amazed that anyone was willing to put up with her child all the way to and from Playplace. I could count on them to cooperate. But Gail's mama.... I'd gone to Western State Preparation for Living with Regina Raymond Crowley.

I landed on the Crowley home and tooted for five minutes before I remembered that Regina was at work.

"_Ma_-ma!" Gail began.

"Wouldn't you like to come to Verne's house," I asked, "and we can call up your mama?"

"No." Well, I asked, didn't I?

I was carrying Gail down the steps from my roof when I bumped unexpectedly into Clay.

"What is that!" he exclaimed, and Gail became again flying blonde hair and kicking feet.

"Regina's child," I said. "What are you doing home?"

"Accountant sent me back. Twenty-five and a half hours is the maximum this week. Good thing, too. I've got a headache." He eyed Gail meaningfully. She was obviously not the sort of thing the doctor orders for a headache.

"I can't help it, honey," I said, sitting down on a step to tear another handkerchief square from my skirt. "I'm going to call Regina at

work now."

"Don't you have a chairman to take care of things like that?"

"I am the chairman," I said proudly.

"Why in heaven's name did you let yourself get roped into something like that?"

"I was _selected_ by Mrs. Baden!"

"Obscenity," said Clay. It is his privilege, of course, to use this word.

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The arty little store where Regina works has a telephane as well as a telephone, and in color, at that. So I could see Regina in full color, taking her own good time about switching on the sound. She switched on as a sort of afterthought and tilted her nose at me. I don't suppose she can really tilt her nose up and down, but she always gives that impression.

"Gail has an incipient streptococcus infection," I said. "They sent her home."

"_Ma_-ma!" Gail cried.

"Why didn't they give her a shot there? That's what they did with my niece last year."

I explained why not.

Regina sighed resignedly. "Verne, people can talk you into anything. There are times when you have to be firm. I work, girl. That's why I put Gail in Playplace. I can't leave here until twelve o'clock."

"But what'll I do with Gail?"

"Take her back. Or you keep her until I get home. Sorry, Verne, but you got yourself into this."

I switched off, furious.

Then I remembered Hi-nin. I couldn't be furious. I was going to have to get Regina's cooperation.

I picked up Gail and went into the bedroom. "I do not dislike Regina Crowley," I wrote with black crayola on a piece of note paper. I

stuck it into a crevice of my mirror and gave Gail my bare-shoulder decorations to play with while I concentrated on thinking up reasons why I should not dislike Regina Crowley.

"I do," Clay said, sneaking up so quietly I jumped two feet.

"So do I," I said, gazing wearily at my note. "But I have to have her in a good mood. You see, there's this Hiserean child and since I'm chairman of the car pool, I have to--"

"_Don't_ tell me about it," Clay said. "My advice to you is get elephantiasis of your steering foot and give the whole thing up now." He glanced meaningfully at Gail, who couldn't possibly be bothering him. She was playing quietly on the floor, pulling the suction disks off my jewelry and sticking them on her legs.

When I finally got Gail home, she sped into her mother's arms and I couldn't help being a little irritated because I had been practically swinging from the ceiling dust controls to ingratiate myself, and her mama just said, "Oh, hi," and Gail was satisfied.

"By the way," I said, watching Regina hang up her dark blue hand-woven jacket, "you wouldn't mind picking up an extra child tomorrow, would you?"

"Mind! Certainly I mind. I've got as much as I can do with my job and Gail and eight children in the heli already."

"It's a Hiserean child," I said. "The mother is so lovely, Regina. She didn't want us to go to any trouble."

"That's fine. Because I'm not going to go to any trouble."

I put my fists behind my back. "Of course I understand, Regina. I think it's remarkable that you manage to do so much. And keep up with your art things as you do. But don't you think it would be an interesting experience to have a Hiserean child in the pool?"

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Regina pulled off her hand-woven wrap-skirt and I was shocked to see she wore a real boudoir slip to work.

"Everybody to their own interesting experiences," she said, laughing at me. This was obviously one of her triple-level remarks.

"De gustibus," I said, to show I know a few arty things myself, "non disputandum est."

"You have such moments, Verne! Have you ever seen a Hiserean child?"

"I saw one today."

"Well."

"Well?"

"De gustibus, as you said. You know the other children will eat it alive, don't you? _Your_ child will. Now Gail...."

It's true that Gail never kicks anyone small enough to kick back. It's also true that Billy bites.

I unclenched my fists and stretched up with a deep breath so as to relax my stomach and improve my posture.

"Hiserean children," I pointed out, "are going to have to be adjusted to our society. As I understand it, they're here to stay. Their sun blew up behind them and personally I think we're lucky they happened to drift here."

"I don't see why it's so lucky. I wish we'd gotten one of the ships full of scientific information. Or their top scientists. Or artists, for that matter. All _we_ got were plain people. If you like to call them people."

"They're at least educated people with good sense. And we've got their ship to take apart and learn things from. And their books and, after all, some music and their gestural art. I should think you artists would find that real avant garde."

"Just hearing you say it like that is enough to kill Hiserean art."

"Regina, I know you think I'm a prig, but that isn't the point. And if it matters to you, I'm _not_ a prig."

"Do you wear boudoir slips?" Regina was biting a real smile.

"No, I don't. But I'd like to."

"Then why don't you?"

"Because I put one on once and I thought I looked absolutely devastating and you know what my husband said?"

"I won't try to guess Clay's bon mot."

"He said, 'What did you put that on for?'"

* * * *

Regina laughed until she popped a snap on her paper house dress. "But seriously," she said finally, "if he didn't know, why didn't you tell him?"

"That's not the point. The point is I am not the boudoir-slip type. My unmentionables are unmentionable for esthetic reasons only."

Regina laughed again. "Really, Verne, you're not half bad when you try."

"If you honestly think I'm not half bad, could you do it just as a favor to me? Pick up Hi-nin when you have the car pool?"

"The Hiserean child? No."

"Please, Regina. I'd do it _for_ you except that the children would notice and it would get back to Mrs. His-tara. If there's anything I could do for you in return--"

"What could you possibly do?"

"I don't know. But I _can't_ go back and tell that dear creature our car pool doesn't want her."

"_Stop_ looking so intense. That's what keeps you from being the boudoir-slip type. You always look as though you're going out to break up a saloon or campaign for better Public Child Protection. The boudoir slip requires a languorous expression."

"Phooey to looking languorous. And phooey to boudoir slips. I'd wear diapers to nursery school if you'd change your mind about taking along Hi-nin."

"Would you wear a boudoir slip?"

"I--hell, yes."

"And nothing else?"

"Only my various means of support. And my respectability."

Regina laughed her tiger-on-the-third-Christian laugh. "What I want to find out," she said, "is how you manage the respectability bit."

It dawned on me while I was grinding the pepper for Clay's salad that Regina had explained herself. All of a sudden I saw straight through her and I wondered why I hadn't seen it before. Regina _envied_ me.

Now on the face of it, that seemed unlikely. But it occurred to me that Regina's parents had been the poor but honest and uneducated sort that simply are never asked to chaperone school parties. And the fact is that they were not what Regina thought of as respectable, though it never occurred to anyone but her that it mattered. And since all her culture was acquired after the age of thirteen, she felt it didn't fit properly and that's why she went out of her way to be arty-arty.

Whereas I took for granted all the things Regina had learned so painstakingly, and this in turn was what made me so irritatingly respectable.

As Regina had suggested, perhaps it _is_ the expression on one's face that makes the difference.

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"Hey!" a cop yelled, pulling up as close to us as his rotors would allow. "What the hell?"

"I beg your pardon," I said frigidly. It is very frigid in November if you are out in a helicopter dressed only in a boudoir slip.

"Look de bleesemans!" Gail cried.

"He might shoot everybody!" Billy warned.

Meli began to cry loudly. "He might _choot_! _Ma_-ma!"

"Pardon me, madam," the cop said, and beat a hasty retreat.

When we landed on Hi-nin's roof, Mrs. His-tara came up with him. She looked at me sympathetically. "You are perhaps molting, beloved friend?" Her large eyes retracted and filled with tears. "Such a season!"

"No--no, dear. Just--getting a little fresh air."

I put Hi-nin on the front seat with me. He gave me a big-eyed, toothless smile and sat down in perfect quiet, except for the soft, almost sea sound of his breathing.

It was during one of those brief and infrequent silences we have that I noticed something was amiss. No sea sound.

I looked around to find Billy's hands around Hi-nin's throat.

"Billy!" I screamed.

"Aw!" he said, and let go.

Hi-nin began to breathe again in a violent, choked way.

"Billy," I said, wondering if I could keep myself from simply throwing my son out of the helicopter, "Billy...."

"It is nothing, nice mama," Hi-nin said, still choking.

"Billy." I didn't trust myself to speak any further. I reached around and spanked him until my hand was sore. "If you ever do that again--"

"Waa!" Billy bawled. I'm sure he could be heard quite plainly by the men building the new astronomical station on the Moon.

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I put Hi-nin on my lap and kept him there. "That's just Billy's way of making friends," I whispered to him.

Under Billy's leadership, several other children began to cry, and all in all it was not a well-integrated, love-sharing group that I lifted down from the heli at Playplace.

"The children always sense it, don't they," Mrs. Baden said with her gentle smile, "when we don't feel comfortable about a situation?"

"Comfortable!" I cried. It seemed to me the day had become blazing hot and I didn't remember what I was dressed in until I tried to take off my jacket. "My son is an inhuman monster. He tried to--to--" I could feel a big sob coming on.

"Bite?" Mrs. Baden supplied helpfully.

"Strangle," I managed to blurt out.

"We'll be especially considerate of Billy today," Mrs. Baden said. "He'll be feeling guilty and he senses your discomfort about his aggression."

"Senses it! I all but tore him limb from limb! That dear little Hiserean child--"

"I do not want to be of difficulty," Hi-nin said, tears pouring out of those great, big eyes.

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Tears were pouring out of my small blue eyes by this time and Mr. Grantham, who brings a set of grandchildren, came by and patted my shoulder.

"Chin up!" he said. "Eyes front!"

Then he looked at his hand and my recently patted shoulder.

"Oh, excuse me," he said. "Would you like to borrow my jacket?"

I shook my head, acutely aware, suddenly, that Mr. Grantham is not a doddering old grandfather but a young and handsome man. And all he thought about my bare shoulder was that it ought to be covered.

"You just run along," Mrs. Baden said. "We'll let Billy strangle the pneumatic dog and everything will be just fine. Oh, and dear--I don't know whether you've noticed it--you don't have on a dress."

I went home and sat in front of the mirror feeling miserable in several different directions. If Regina Raymond Crowley appeared in public dressed only in a boudoir slip, people would think all sorts of wicked things. When I appeared in public in a boudoir slip, everybody thought I was just a little absentminded.

This, I thought, is a hell of a thing to worry about. And then I thought, Oh, phooey. If even I think I'm respectable, what can I expect other people to think?

I took down the note on the mirror about Regina. No wonder I didn't like her! I turned the paper over and wrote "Phooey to me!" with my eyebrow pencil.

I was still regarding the note and trying to argue myself into a better mood when Clay came tramping down from work at three o'clock.

"Why are you sitting around in a boudoir slip?" he asked.

"You're a double-dyed louse and a great, big alligator head," I told him.

"Don't mention it," he said. "Where's Billy?"

"Taking his nap. Tell me the truth, Clay. The absolute truth."

Clay looked at me suspiciously. "I'd planned on a little golf this afternoon."

"This won't take a minute. I don't ask you things like this all the time, now do I?"

"I still don't know what you're talking about."

I took a deep breath. "Clay, is there anything about me, anything at all, that is not respectable?"

"There is _not_," he said.

"Well--I guess that's all there is to it," I sighed. I pulled off my boudoir slip and got a neat paper one out of the slot. "Anyway," I said bravely, "boudoir slips have to be laundered."

Clay looked at me curiously for a moment and then said, "This looks like a good afternoon to go play golf."

"Do you think there's anything not respectable about Regina Crowley?"

"There is _everything_ not respectable about Regina Crowley," Clay said vehemently.

"You see?"

"Frankly, no."

"Well, do you think her husband uses that tone of voice when he says, 'There is _everything_ respectable about Verne Barrat?'"

"I don't know why he should say that at all."

"She might ask him."

"Darling, you're mad as a hatter," Clay said, kissing me good-by.

"Do you really think so?"

"Of course not," Clay roared as he tramped up the steps to the heli.

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About nine o'clock the next morning I heard a heli landing on the roof and I thought, Now who? There was much tooting, and when I went up, Regina practically threw Hi-nin at me.

"I told you so," she snapped at me. Her face was burning red and she wasn't bothering to tilt her nose.

"What happened? Why did you bring him back to _me_?"

"His hand," she said, and took off.

Hand? He was holding one hand over the other. No! I grabbed his hands to see what it was.

One hand had obviously been bitten off at the wrist. He was holding the wound with the tentacles of his other little boneless hand. There was very little blood.

"It is as nothing," he said, but when I cradled him in my arms, I could feel him shaking all over.

"It will grow back," he said.

Would it?

I took him in the heli and held him while I drove. I could feel him trying to stop himself from shaking, but he couldn't.

"Does it hurt very much?" I asked.

"The pain is small," he said. "It is the fear. The fear is terrible. I am unable to swallow it."

I was unable to swallow it, too.

"The hand," said Mrs. His-tara without concern, "will grow back. But the things within my son...." She, too, began to tremble involuntarily.

"Billy," I began, feeling the blood come through my lower lip, "Billy and I are...." It was too inadequate to say it.

"It was not Billy," Hi-nin said without rancor. "It was Gail."

"Gail! Gail doesn't bite!" But she had, and I broke down and plain cried.

"Do not trouble yourself," said Mrs. His-tara. "My son receives from this a wound that does not heal. On Hiserea he would be forever sick, you understand. On your world, where everyone is born with this open wound, it will be his protection. So Mrs. Baden warned me and I think she is wise."

As soon as I got home, I called up Regina. She looked pale and lifeless against the gaudy, irresponsible objects in the art shop.

"It wasn't my fault," she said quickly. "I can't drive and watch the children at the same time. I told you the children would eat...." She stopped, and for the first time I saw Regina really horrified with herself.

"Nobody said it was your fault. But don't you think you could have taken Hi-nin home yourself? To show Mrs. His-tara that--I don't know what it would show."

It reminded me, somehow, of the time Regina stepped on a lizard and left it in great pain, pulling itself along by its tiny front paws, and I had said, "Regina, you can't leave that poor thing suffering," and she had said, "Well, I didn't step on it on purpose," and I had said, "Somebody's got to kill it now," and she had said, "I've got a class." I could still feel the crunch of it under my foot as its tiny life went out.

"Sorry, Verne," she said, "you got yourself into this," and hung up.

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That night Regina called me. "Can you give blood?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "If I stuff myself, I can get the scales up to a hundred and ten pounds."

"What type?"

"B. Rh positive."

"Thought you told me that once. Gail is in the hospital. They have to replace every drop of blood in her body. She may die anyhow."

I thought of the little fluff and squeak that was Gail. I eat de crus' of de toas'.

"What's the matter with her?" I asked fearfully.

"That damn Hiserean child is poison. Gail had a little cut inside her mouth from where she fell off the slide at school."

"I'll be at the hospital in ten minutes," I said, and hung up shakily. "Dinner is set for seven-thirty," I told Clay and Billy, and rushed out.

The first person I saw at the hospital was not Regina. It was Mrs. His-tara.

"How did you know?" I asked. Her integument was dull now and there were patches of scales rubbed off. Her eyes were almost not visible.

"Mrs. Crowley called me," she said. "In any case I would have been here. There is in Hi-nin also of poison. There remains for him only the Return Home. We must rejoice for him."

The smile she brought forth was more than I could bear.

"Gail's germs were poison to him?"

"Oh, no. He poisons himself. It is an ancient hormone, from the early days of our race when we had what your Mrs. Baden so wisely calls aggression. It is dormant in us since before the accounting of our history. An adult Hiserean, perhaps, could fight his emotions and cure himself. Hi-nin has no weapons--so your physicians have explained it to me, from our scientific books. How can I doubt that they are right?"

How could I doubt it, either? It would be, I thought, rather like a massive overdose of adrenalin. Psychogenic, of course, but what help was it to know that? Would there be some organ in Hi-nin a surgeon could remove? Like the adrenals in humans, perhaps?

Of course not. If they could have, they would have.

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I hurried on to find the room where Gail was. She was not pale, as I had expected, but pink-cheeked and bright-eyed. They were probably putting in more blood than they were taking out. There were two of the other mamas from our car pool, waiting their turns.

Regina was sitting by the bed, her face ugly and swollen from crying.

"She looks just fine!" I exclaimed.

"Only in the last fifteen minutes," she said. "When I called you, she was like ice. Her eyes didn't move."

"We're lucky with Gail. Did you know about Hi-nin?"

"The little animal!" she said. "He's the one that did it."

"He didn't do anything, Regina, and you know it."

"He shouldn't have been in the car pool. He shouldn't be with human children at all."

"He's going to die," I said quickly, before she had time to say things she'd have nightmares about later on.

"Sorry," Regina said, because we were all looking at her and because her child was pink and beautiful and healthy while Hi-nin....

"Regina," I said, "what did you do after it happened?"

"_Do!_ It scared the hell out of me--that creature shaking all over and Gail screaming. At first I didn't know what had happened. Then I saw that _thing_ flopping around on the front seat and I screamed and threw it out of the window. And then I noticed Hi-nin's wrist, or whatever you call it. I said, 'Oh, God, I _knew_ you'd get us in trouble!' But the creature didn't say anything. He just sat there. And I let the other children off and brought Hi-nin to you because I didn't want to get involved with that Mrs. Baden."

"And Gail?"

"She seemed all right. She just climbed in the back with the other children and pretty soon they were all laughing."

"And all that time little Hi-nin.... Regina, didn't you even pat him or hold him or kiss it for him or anything?"

"_Kiss_ it!"

At that moment Mrs. His-tara came in, with Mrs. Baden and a doctor behind her. I should have known. Mrs. Baden didn't leave people to fight battles alone.

Mrs. His-tara looked at Mrs. Baden, but Mrs. Baden only nodded and smiled encouragingly at her.

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The doctor was gently pulling the needle out of Gail's vein. The room was silent. Even Gail sat large-eyed and solemn.

"Mrs. Crowley," Mrs. His-tara began, obviously dragging each word up with great effort, "would it be accurate to tell my son that Gail has received no hurt from him? We must, you see, prepare him for the Return Home."

Regina looked around at us and at Gail. She hadn't dared let herself look at Mrs. His-tara yet.

"Doctor!" Regina called suddenly. "Look at Gail's mouth!"

Even from where I was, I could see it. A scaly growth along both lips.

"That's a temporary effect of the serum," the doctor said. "We tried an antitoxin before we decided to change the blood. It is nothing to worry about."

"Oh."

"Mrs. Crowley," Mrs. His-tara began again, "it is much to ask, but at such a moment, much is required. If you could come yourself, and if Gail could endure to be carried...."

But Gail did, indeed, look queer, and she stretched out her arms not to her mother but to Mrs. His-tara.

"The tides," Mrs. His-tara said, "have cast us up a miracle."

She gathered Gail into the boneless cradle of her curved arms.

Regina took her sunglasses out of her purse and hid her eyes. "Mind your own damned business," she told Mrs. Baden and me.

"It is our damned business," I whispered to Mrs. Baden, and she held my arm as we followed Regina down the hall.

Mrs. His-tara threaded her way through a cordon of other Hisereans who must have been flown in for the occasion. I couldn't see the children, but I could hear them.

"Him cold!" said Gail. "Him scared!"

"He's scared of you," Regina said. "We're sorry, Gail. Tell him we're sorry. We didn't understand."

Gail laughed. A loud and healthy laugh.

"Gail sorry," she said. "Me thought you was to eat."

There was a small sound. I thought it was from Hi-nin and I held Mrs. Baden's hand as though it were my only link to a sane world.

"Dat a joke," Gail said. "Hi-nin 'posed to laugh!"

Then there was a silence and Regina started to say something but Mrs. His-tara whispered, "Please! It is a thought between the children."

Then there was a small, quiet laugh from Hi-nin. "In truth," he said with that oh, so familiar lisp, "it is funny."

"Me don't do it again," Gail said, solemn now.

* * * * *

When I got home it was so late that the stars were sliding down the sky and I just knew Clay wouldn't have thought to turn the parking lights on. But he had.

Furthermore, he was still up.

"Were you worried?" I asked delightedly.

"No. Regina called a couple of hours ago."

"_Regina?_"

"She said she was concerned about the expression on your face."

Clay handed me a present, all wrapped in gold stickum with an electronic butterfly bouncing airily around on it.

I peeled the paper off carefully, to save it for Billy, and set the butterfly on the sticky side.

Inside the box was a gorgeous blue fluffy affair of no apparent utility.

"Oh, _Clay_!" I gasped. "I can't wear anything like _this_!" I slipped out of my paper clothes and the gown slithered around me.

Hastily, I pulled the pins out of my hair, brushed it back and smeared on some lipstick.

"I look silly," I said. "I'm all the wrong type." My little crayola note was still stuck in the mirror. Phooey to me. "You're laughing at me."

"I'm not. You don't really look respectable at all, Verne."

I ran into the dining area. "Regina told you about the boudoir slip!"

I heard Clay stumble over a chair in the dark.

"Obscenity!" he said. "All right, she did. So what? I think you look like a call girl."

I ran into the living room and hid behind the sofa. "Do you really, truly think so?"

"Absolutely!" Another chair clattered and Clay toed the living room lights. "Ah!" he said. "I've got you cornered. You look like a chorus girl. You look like an easy pickup. You look like a dirty little--"

"Stop," I cried, "while you're still winning!"

The GOP's Assault on Women (2012)

by John Yarmuth

Source: 2012 Congressional Record, Vol. 158, Pg. H1164 Text at www.gpo.gov.

Speech in Congressional Record, March 6, 2012.

The GOP's Assault on Women

HON. JOHN YARMUTH
OF KENTUCKY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2012

THE GOP'S ASSAULT ON WOMEN

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, Rush Limbaugh's appalling attack on Georgetown student Sandra Fluke is no isolated incident, but part of a broader GOP assault on women's health.

Republicans have ushered in Women's History Month with legislation to allow employers and insurance companies to deny women needed health coverage. But let's also take a look at their recent record on issues important to women's health.

Last year, Republicans voted to end Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of reproductive health services in the United States. They voted to eliminate funding for Title X family planning which, for 40 years, has provided family planning services, cancer screenings, and other preventive health services to low-income women.

And with their attempt to repeal the health care reform law, Republicans voted to allow insurance companies to, once again, deny women coverage if they've ever been pregnant, had a C-section, or been the victim of domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, Republicans' idea of Women's History Month is reenacting the women's equality fight of 100 years ago.

I call on my GOP colleagues to join us here in the 21st century, where women not only raise families, they have jobs, and they even wear pants.

This work is in the public domain in the United States because it is a work of the United States federal government (see 17 U.S.C. 105).

Representative Jackie Speier Remarks to Congress (April 10, 2008)

by Jackie Speier

Congressional Record, April 10, 2008. (available online)
Representative Jackie Speier Remarks to Congress

April 10, 2008

It is a real honor to be introduced by the Dean of the California Delegation, who was serving his district with distinction back when I worked here as a staffer. And I am thrilled to be joining the Gentlewoman from California, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, one of my longest and dearest friends; and the Gentleman from California, Congressman Mike Thompson, who taught me all I needed to know when I first arrived in the California State Legislature in 1986.

Madame Speaker, I didn't think it was possible for a person to be filled with both pride and humility at the same time, but that is exactly how I feel today. I am proud to have been chosen by a substantial majority of San Francisco and San Mateo County voters. I am humbled by the faith they have placed in me and by the awesome legacy this particular seat holds.

Recently, I was introduced as having been elected to replace Tom Lantos. I had to laugh. I was elected to succeed Congressman Lantos – no one will ever replace him.

I also follow in the footsteps of Leo Ryan, who served this chamber with distinction until he was assassinated thirty years ago. I was privileged to serve on Congressman Ryan's staff. I learned from one of the best and he taught me three important lessons:

1. Question the status quo.
2. Always listen to the people you represent.
3. Always stand up for what you believe in --- even if you have to stand alone.

Madame Speaker, I was struck with something while campaigning for this seat. A public servant is never more in tune with her constituents than when she is first running for an office. While holding over sixty community meetings in my district, the most common question was, "When will we get out of Iraq?" It was asked by voters across the spectrum – veterans, students, parents, the prosperous, middle class and those still working toward their piece of the American dream.

The process to bring the troops home must begin immediately. The President wants to stay the course and a man who wants to replace him suggests we could be in Iraq for a hundred years. But Madame Speaker, history will not judge us kindly if we sacrifice four generations of Americans because of the folly of one.

And Madame Speaker, as passionate as people are about getting out of Iraq, they are also worried about their jobs, their houses and their futures.

I got an earful from taxpayers, outraged that the Fed bailed out Bear Stearns while neighbors are losing their homes to predatory lending practices. A man in a union hall put it simply: "When will our government care as much for Main Street Americans as Wall Street speculators?" As long as I am here,

I will strive to make sure that the voices of Main Street are heard as loudly as the voices of Wall Street.

Madame Speaker, you are an inspiration to me, to America, and to women all over the world. I stand before you, eager to learn and ready to help make the laws of the greatest country on earth reflect its values --- Fairness, justice and a guarantee that working men and women, parents, students, seniors, the disabled and the disaffected – every American – has the right to a seat at the table of opportunity.

This work is in the public domain in the United States because it is a work of the United States federal government (see 17 U.S.C. 105).

Representative Louise McIntosh Slaughter speech on FARM act of 2013 (2013)

by Dorothy Louise McIntosh Slaughter

Source: 2013 Congressional Record, Vol. 159, Pg. H3708 (June 18, 2013). www.gpo.gov.
Representative Louise McIntosh Slaughter. United States House of Representatives.
PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1947, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1797, PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT. House Resolution 266. 'Congressional Record Volume 159, Number 87 (Tuesday, June 18, 2013). House. Pages H3708-H3720.

Representative Louise McIntosh Slaughter speech on FARM act of 2013

HON. Louise McIntosh Slaughter

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 18, 2013

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding me the customary 30 minutes and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, for 40 years I've been marching for this women's choice bill, but we seem never to finish with it. It's something that people like to drag up and bring out.

In that regard, I want to ask the women of America to think of two things. First, I want you to remember the panel that Chairman Issa put together last year to discuss contraception and whether or not women should have access to it. If you recall, that panel was made up entirely of men. There was a young woman, a graduate of law school, who wanted to speak that day; but she was found to be unworthy, unable to speak. Indeed, her virtue, her character, everything else about her was assailed because she had tried to do what many of us know we can do here, and that is speak.

Think about another thing now. Think about the Judiciary Committee; 22--now 23--all white guys turning down every amendment to try to preserve women's health, to try to preserve women's psyche, and do anything in the world to do this--and to try to discuss that this bill, as my colleague vainly tried to do, that this is unconstitutional. Everybody knows it. Everybody knows the Senate's not going to take this up. This is purely window dressing.

And as I do here often, I want to remind everybody that it costs \$24 million a week to run the House of Representatives. We've spent over \$54 billion almost already now just trying to repeal the health care bill.

When in the world are we going to get to work? 2\1/2\ weeks from now, the interest rate on college loans will double. Are we doing anything about that? Not a thing on Earth. Do we care about the people who are out of work? Do we care about the people who are facing loss of their food stamps? No. We care more about war on women. Women of America, keep those two panels before your mind forever. Those are the deciders--the men on Issa's panel, the men on the Judiciary Committee.

Now, in State Houses all over this country, and in Governors' mansions and Halls of Congress, the majority's antichoice agenda is driven by men in blue suits and red ties who seem to believe that once they get elected to something, they have a right to play doctor. I would like to think about what they have done over the last years to remind my fellow American women.

Already, because of the majority's efforts, women in eight States are required to undergo an ultrasound before they can exercise their constitutionally protected right to a safe and legal abortion--an ultrasound that is not medically necessary, an ultrasound that is medically contradicted, and an ultrasound for which they are required themselves to pay. As we speak, the legislators in the State of Wisconsin have passed a similar measure through the State House and are awaiting the enactment into law.

Most telling is right now more States have a waiting period for abortions than a waiting period to buy a gun. Let me say that again. More States have a waiting period for abortions--a constitutionally protected procedure--than have a waiting period to buy a gun.

Now, here in Congress, the majority conducted a hearing at the Oversight and Government Reform Committee last year that I have already spoken of. There were five men and zero women. As you know, they talked about Sandra Fluke and all the vituperation and hatred that was poured down on her because she wanted to speak.

But just last week--I think this past week--the majority took it a whole lot further. For the first time, during the committee, after it was all passed and gone, before it goes to the Rules Committee, the sponsor of this bill made one of those comments like Todd Akin had made. And I think if you scratch an awful lot of guys on that committee, they all feel the same way because it keeps coming up over and over. You can't get pregnant, they say, if you're raped. They believe that in the bottom of their heart, and some of them were doctors. But during the committee amendments to include the exceptions for the health of the mother and victims of rape and incest, they were rejected along party lines.

Mr. Franks has been taken off the bill, and for the first time, in my recollection, unanimous consent has to be given here to ask a woman-- they have found a Republican woman who would take this bill--off a completely other committee and allow her to manage the bill. If that is not a first, I don't know what is. And if that is not PR, I don't know what is. And if that is not simply trying to fool you, I don't know what else that is.

As Mr. Franks' remark and the extreme nature of his bill became clear, they realized they were about to anger the American women even more than they had last fall, and you know how that turned out at the election. Instead of abandoning the legislation and respecting a woman's right to choose, they decided to try to make changes to the underlying bill, after it had already passed through committee, and assign a woman outside the committee to manage a bill on the floor.

Such a cowardly move is an insult to the intelligence of women in America. You are supposed to believe this was all done well and properly. No amount of window dressing is going to change the fact that you are severely trying to restrict a woman's right to choose with today's bill. I don't think anybody makes any bones about that.

The majority has argued the legislation is in response to new science, even though if there has ever been a House of Representatives that cared not a whit for science, I can't imagine they would come even close to this one. When a fetus feels pain is the new idea. As my colleague, Mr. Nadler, has previously made clear, their so-called ``new findings are nothing more than the marginal views that fly in the face of established science. In fact, one of the experts upon which the majority relies has testified that science for and against fetal pain is most uncertain.

The fact of the matter is that today's legislation is unconstitutional and contains a narrow and adequate exception for the life of a woman and a victim of rape and incest. No man on any of those committees, no man on any of those panels, is ever going to have to face that problem himself of rape and incest. How strange it is that they know the precise answer for people who are victimized by it.

Many serious health conditions actually materialize or worsen after the 20-week mark in a pregnancy and can seriously compromise the health of the mother. A physician has to be able to provide the best care for their patients; and in cases where a woman's health is exacerbated by pregnancy, politicians have no right in intruding in the doctor-patient relationship and criminalizing those trying to protect their patients' lives and safety.

Furthermore, the majority's requirement that a victim of rape or incest report the crime to authorities before receiving an abortion effectively prevents many victims from exercising the right to choose. More than half of all rape victims, as we know, don't report, and that is a sad thing.

The requirement in today's bill ensures that a woman who has been a victim of rape or incest faces massive barriers to exercising her right to safe and legal reproductive health care. Mr. Speaker, from requiring women to undergo mandatory ultrasounds to applying police reporting requirements for victims of rape, the majority has made it very clear that they don't trust women. In fact, it came up at the Judiciary Committee that one of the reasons they needed to report it to police is because women would lie. I think they make an exception in that case for their sisters, their daughters, their mothers, perhaps. It is just the rest of us who can't be trusted.

Try as he might, no man will ever understand the choice that faces a young woman who is told that she suffers from severe valvular heart disease and that, if she carries a child to term, her life and the life of that child are at risk, or the choice of a woman who is violently raped and would be reminded of the crime against her every moment of every day if she is forced to carry the pregnancy to term.

I urge my colleagues to respect the established science on this issue and the constitutional right of every

American woman. Reject today's rule and the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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ODE TO SAPPHO

Project Gutenberg's *A Sheaf of Verses*, by Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall

*If not from Phaon I must hope for ease,
Ah! let me seek it from the raging seas:
To raging seas unpitied I'll remove;
And either cease to live or cease to love.*

OVID'S _Heroic Epistle_, XV.

Immortal Lesbian! canst thou still behold
From some far sphere wherein thy soul doth sing
This earth, that once was thine, while glimmered gold
The joyous beams of youth's forgotten spring?

Can thine unfathomed eyes embrace this sea,
Whose ebb and flow once echoed in thy brain?
Whose tides bear record of thine ecstasy
And thy despair, that in its arms hath lain?

Those love-burnt lips! Can death have quenched their fire?
Whose words oft stir our senses to unrest?
Whose eager ardour caught and held desire,
A searing flame against thy living breast?

Passion-wan Lesbian, in that awful place
Where spirits wander lost without a name
Thou still art Sappho, and thine ardent face
Lights up the gloom with love's enduring flame.

Oh! Goddess, woman, lover, all divine
And yet divinely mortal, where thou art
Comes not as cadence from some song of thine
Each throbbing beat that stirs the human heart?

Canst thou forget us who are still thy friends,

Thy lovers, o'er the cloudy gulf of years?
Who live, and love, and dying make amends
For life's short pleasures thro' death's endless fears?

Once thou didst seek the solace of thy kind,
The madness of a kiss was more to thee
Than Heaven or Hell, the greatness of thy mind
Could not conceive more potent ecstasy!

Life was thy slave, and gave thee of her store
Rich gifts and many, yet with all the pain
Of hopeless longing made thy spirit sore,
E'en _thou_ didst yearn, and couldst not attain.

Oh! Sappho, sister, by that agony
Of soul and body hast thou gained a place
Within each age that shines majestic'ly
Across the world from out the dusk of space.

Not thy deep pleasures, nor thy swiftest joys,
Have made thee thus, immortal and yet dear
To mortal hearts, but that which naught destroys,
The sacred image of thy falling tear.

Beloved Lesbian! we would dare to claim
By that same tear fond union with thy lot;
Yet 'tis enough, if when we breathe thy name
Thy soul but listens, and forgets us not.

The Discovery of Radium (1921)

by Marie Skłodowska Curie

Ellen S. Richards Monographs No. 2

Published by Vassar College

Address by

Madame M. Curie

at Vassar College

May 14, 1921

PREFATORY NOTE

IN HER recent visit to America, Madame Curie conferred a special honor upon Vassar College by delivering in the chapel on the evening of May fourteenth the only extended address which she made in this country. In a simple, straightforward way she told the story of her great achievement. One realized how, closely environed by all the great realities of human experience, in the face of tremendous difficulties and with limited resources, she had pursued undaunted her search for truth.

The discovery of radium gave Madame Curie immediate distinction among scientists on account of the extremely significant contribution she thereby made to the great ultimate problem of physical science, the constitution of matter. The striking properties possessed by radium gave to its discovery a world-wide interest, all the more intense because of the hope which was inspired by the possible healing qualities of the radiations from this new element.

That hope is being realized in large measure. It is therefore fitting that this address should have been given by Madame Curie at Vassar and that it should now be circulated among the members of the college under the foundation in memory of Ellen S. Richards, who devoted her life to the public health.

Edna Carter
Chairman of the
Department of Physics.

THE DISCOVERY OF RADIUM

I could tell you many things about radium and radioactivity and it would take a long time. But as we can not do that, I shall only give you a short account of my early work about radium. Radium is no more a baby, it is more than twenty years old, but the conditions of the discovery were somewhat peculiar, and so it is always of interest to remember them and to explain them.

We must go back to the year 1897. Professor Curie and I worked at that time in the laboratory of the school of Physics and Chemistry where Professor Curie held his lectures. I was engaged in some work on uranium rays which had been discovered two years before by Professor Becquerel. I shall tell you how these uranium rays may be detected. If you take a photographic plate and wrap it in black paper and then on this plate, protected from ordinary light, put some uranium salt and leave it a day, and the next day the plate is developed, you notice on the plate a black spot at the place where the uranium salt was. This spot has been made by special rays which are given out by the uranium and are able to make an impression on the plate in the same way as ordinary light. You can also test those rays in another way, by placing them on an electroscope. You know what an electroscope is. If you charge it, you can keep it charged several hours and more, unless uranium salts are placed near to it. But if this is the case the electroscope loses its charge and the gold or aluminum leaf falls gradually in a progressive way. The speed with which the leaf moves may be used as a measure of the intensity of the rays; the greater the speed, the greater the intensity.

I spent some time in studying the way of making good measurements of the uranium rays, and then I wanted to know if there were other elements, giving out rays of the same kind. So I took up a work about all known elements, and their compounds and found that uranium compounds are active and also all thorium compounds, but other elements were not found active, nor were their compounds. As for the

uranium and thorium compounds, I found that they were active in proportion to their uranium or thorium content. The more uranium or thorium, the greater the activity, the activity being an atomic property of the elements, uranium and thorium.

Then I took up measurements of minerals and I found that several of those which contain uranium or thorium or both were active. But then the activity was not what I could expect, it was greater than for uranium or thorium compounds like the oxides which are almost entirely composed of these elements. Then I thought that there should be in the minerals some unknown element having a much greater radioactivity than uranium or thorium. And I wanted to find and to separate that element, and I settled to that work with Professor Curie. We thought it would be done in several weeks or months, but it was not so. It took many years of hard work to finish that task. There was not one new element, there were several of them. But the most important is radium which could be separated in a pure state.

All the tests for the separation were done by the method of electrical measurements with some kind of electroscope. We just had to make chemical separations and to examine all products obtained with respect to their activity. The product which retained the radioactivity was considered as that one which had kept the new element; and, as the radioactivity was more strong in some products, we knew that we had succeeded in concentrating the new element. The radioactivity was used in the same way as a spectroscopical test.

The difficulty was that there is not much radium in a mineral; this we did not know at the beginning. But we now know that there is not even one part of radium in a million parts of good ore. And too, to get a small quantity of pure radium salt, one is obliged to work up a huge quantity of ore. And that was very hard in a laboratory.

We had not even a good laboratory at that time. We worked in a hangar where there were no improvements, no good chemical arrangements. We had no help, no money. And because of that the work could not go on as it would have done under better conditions. I did myself the numerous crystallizations which were wanted to get the radium salt separated from the barium salt with which it is obtained out of the ore. And in 1902 I finally succeeded in getting pure radium chloride and determining the atomic weight of the new element radium, which is 226 while that of barium is only 137.

Later I could also separate the metal radium, but that was a very difficult work; and, as it is not necessary for the use of radium to have it in this state, it is not generally prepared that way.

Now, the special interest of radium is in the intensity of its rays which is several million times greater than the uranium rays. And the effects of the rays make the radium so important. If we take a practical point of view, then the most important property of the rays is the production of physiological effects on the cells of the human organism. These effects may be used for the cure of several diseases. Good results have been obtained in many cases. What is considered particularly important is the treatment of cancer. The medical utilization of radium makes it necessary to get that element in sufficient quantities. And so a factory of radium was started to begin with in France, and later in America where a big quantity of ore named carnotite is available. America does produce many grams of radium every year but the price is still very high because the quantity of radium contained in the ore is so small. The radium is more than a hundred thousand times dearer than gold.

But we must not forget that when radium was discovered no one knew that it would prove useful in hospitals. The work was one of pure science. And this is a proof that scientific work must not be

considered from the point of view of the direct usefulness of it. It must be done for itself, for the beauty of science, and then there is always the chance that a scientific discovery may become like the radium a benefit for humanity.

But science is not rich, it does not dispose of important means, it does not generally meet recognition before the material usefulness of it has been proved. The factories produce many grams of radium every year, but the laboratories have very small quantities. It is the same for my laboratory and I am very grateful to the American women who wish me to have more of radium and give me the opportunity of doing more work with it.

The scientific history of radium is beautiful. The properties of the rays have been studied very closely. We know that particles are expelled from radium with a very great velocity near to that of the light. We know that the atoms of radium are destroyed by expulsion of these particles, some of which are atoms of helium. And in that way it has been proved that the radioactive elements are constantly disintegrating and that they produce at the end ordinary elements, principally helium and lead. That is, as you see, a theory of transformation of atoms which are not stable, as was believed before, but may undergo spontaneous changes.

Radium is not alone in having these properties. Many having other radioelements are known already, the polonium, the mesothorium, the radiothorium, the actinium. We know also radioactive gases, named emanations. There is a great variety of substances and effects in radioactivity. There is always a vast field left to experimentation and I hope that we may have some beautiful progress in the following years. It is my earnest desire that some of you should carry on this scientific work and keep for your ambition the determination to make a permanent contribution to science.

M. Curie.

Marie Curie

With my friendship for the students of Vassar College.

M. Curie[author 2]

The following text is written on the title page

"It is my earnest desire that some of you shall carry on this scientific work and will keep for your ambition the determination to make a permanent contribution to science.

M. Curie"

(Wikisource contributor note)

handwritten note below photograph (Wikisource contributor note)

Marjorie's Three Gifts

by Louisa May Alcott

Marjorie sat on the door-step, shelling peas, quite unconscious what a pretty picture she made, with the

roses peeping at her through the lattice work of the porch, the wind playing hide-and-seek in her curly hair, while the sunshine with its silent magic changed her faded gingham to a golden gown, and shimmered on the bright tin pan as if it were a silver shield. Old Rover lay at her feet, the white kitten purred on her shoulder, and friendly robins hopped about her in the grass, chirping "A happy birthday, Marjorie!"

But the little maid neither saw nor heard, for her eyes were fixed on the green pods, and her thoughts were far away. She was recalling the fairy-tale granny told her last night, and wishing with all her heart that such things happened nowadays. For in this story, as a poor girl like herself sat spinning before the door, a Brownie came by, and gave the child a good-luck penny; then a fairy passed, and left a talisman which would keep her always happy; and last of all, the prince rolled up in his chariot, and took her away to reign with him over a lovely kingdom, as a reward for her many kindnesses to others.

When Marjorie imagined this part of the story, it was impossible to help giving one little sigh, and for a minute she forgot her work, so busy was she thinking what beautiful presents she would give to all the poor children in her realm when THEY had birthdays. Five impatient young peas took this opportunity to escape from the half-open pod in her hand and skip down the steps, to be immediately gobbled up by an audacious robin, who gave thanks in such a shrill chirp that Marjorie woke up, laughed, and fell to work again. She was just finishing, when a voice called out from the lane,--

"Hi, there! come here a minute, child!" and looking up, she saw a little old man in a queer little carriage drawn by a fat little pony.

Running down to the gate, Marjorie dropped a curtsy, saying pleasantly,--

"What did you wish, sir?"

"Just undo that check-rein for me. I am lame, and Jack wants to drink at your brook," answered the old man, nodding at her till his spectacles danced on his nose.

Marjorie was rather afraid of the fat pony, who tossed his head, whisked his tail, and stamped his feet as if he was of a peppery temper. But she liked to be useful, and just then felt as if there were few things she could NOT do if she tried, because it was her birthday. So she proudly let down the rein, and when Jack went splashing into the brook, she stood on the bridge, waiting to check him up again after he had drunk his fill of the clear, cool water.

The old gentleman sat in his place, looking up at the little girl, who was smiling to herself as she watched the blue dragon-flies dance among the ferns, a blackbird tilt on the alderboughs, and listened to the babble of the brook.

"How old are you, child?" asked the old man, as if he rather envied this rosy creature her youth and health.

"Twelve to-day, sir;" and Marjorie stood up straight and tall, as if mindful of her years.

"Had any presents?" asked the old man, peering up with an odd smile.

"One, sir,--here it is;" and she pulled out of her pocket a tin savings-bank in the shape of a desirable family mansion, painted red, with a green door and black chimney. Proudly displaying it on the rude

railing of the bridge, she added, with a happy face,--

"Granny gave it to me, and all the money in it is going to be mine."

"How much have you got?" asked the old gentleman, who appeared to like to sit there in the middle of the brook, while Jack bathed his feet and leisurely gurgled and sneezed.

"Not a penny yet, but I'm going to earn some," answered Marjorie, patting the little bank with an air of resolution pretty to see.

"How will you do it?" continued the inquisitive old man.

"Oh, I'm going to pick berries and dig dandelions, and weed, and drive cows, and do chores. It is vacation, and I can work all the time, and earn ever so much."

"But vacation is play-time,--how about that?"

"Why, that sort of work IS play, and I get bits of fun all along. I always have a good swing when I go for the cows, and pick flowers with the dandelions. Weeding isn't so nice, but berrying is very pleasant, and we have good times all together."

"What shall you do with your money when you get it?"

"Oh, lots of things! Buy books and clothes for school, and, if I get a great deal, give some to granny. I'd love to do that, for she takes care of me, and I'd be so proud to help her!"

"Good little lass!" said the old gentleman, as he put his hand in his pocket. "Would you now?" he added, apparently addressing himself to a large frog who sat upon a stone, looking so wise and grandfatherly that it really did seem quite proper to consult him. At all events, he gave his opinion in the most decided manner, for, with a loud croak, he turned an undignified somersault into the brook, splashing up the water at a great rate. "Well, perhaps it wouldn't be best on the whole. Industry is a good teacher, and money cannot buy happiness, as I know to my sorrow."

The old gentleman still seemed to be talking to the frog, and as he spoke he took his hand out of his pocket with less in it than he had at first intended.

"What a very queer person!" thought Marjorie, for she had not heard a word, and wondered what he was thinking about down there.

Jack walked out of the brook just then, and she ran to check him up; not an easy task for little hands, as he preferred to nibble the grass on the bank. But she did it cleverly, smoothed the ruffled mane, and, dropping another curtsy, stood aside to let the little carriage pass.

"Thank you, child--thank you. Here is something for your bank, and good luck to it."

As he spoke, the old man laid a bright gold dollar in her hand, patted the rosy cheek, and vanished in a cloud of dust, leaving Marjorie so astonished at the grandeur of the gift, that she stood looking at it as if it had been a fortune. It was to her; and visions of pink calico gowns, new grammars, and fresh hat-ribbons danced through her head in delightful confusion, as her eyes rested on the shining coin in her

palm.

Then, with a solemn air, she invested her first money by popping it down the chimney of the scarlet mansion, and peeping in with one eye to see if it landed safely on the ground-floor. This done, she took a long breath, and looked over the railing, to be sure it was not all a dream. No; the wheel marks were still there, the brown water was not yet clear, and, if a witness was needed, there sat the big frog again, looking so like the old gentleman, with his bottle-green coat, speckled trousers, and twinkling eyes, that Marjorie burst out laughing, and clapped her hands, saying aloud,--

"I'll play he was the Brownie, and this is the good-luck penny he gave me. Oh, what fun!" and away she skipped, rattling the dear new bank like a castanet.

When she had told granny all about it, she got knife and basket, and went out to dig dandelions; for the desire to increase her fortune was so strong, she could not rest a minute. Up and down she went, so busily peering and digging, that she never lifted up her eyes till something like a great white bird skimmed by so low she could not help seeing it. A pleasant laugh sounded behind her as she started up, and, looking round, she nearly sat down again in sheer surprise, for there close by was a slender little lady, comfortably established under a big umbrella.

"If there were any fairies, I'd be sure that was one," thought Marjorie, staring with all her might, for her mind was still full of the old story; and curious things do happen on birthdays, as every one knows.

It really did seem rather elfish to look up suddenly and see a lovely lady all in white, with shining hair and a wand in her hand, sitting under what looked very like a large yellow mushroom in the middle of a meadow, where, till now, nothing but cows and grasshoppers had been seen. Before Marjorie could decide the question, the pleasant laugh came again, and the stranger said, pointing to the white thing that was still fluttering over the grass like a little cloud,--

"Would you kindly catch my hat for me, before it blows quite away?"

Down went basket and knife, and away ran Marjorie, entirely satisfied now that there was no magic about the new-comer; for if she had been an elf, couldn't she have got her hat without any help from a mortal child? Presently, however, it did begin to seem as if that hat was bewitched, for it led the nimble-footed Marjorie such a chase that the cows stopped feeding to look on in placid wonder; the grasshoppers vainly tried to keep up, and every ox-eye daisy did its best to catch the runaway, but failed entirely, for the wind liked a game of romps, and had it that day. As she ran, Marjorie heard the lady singing, like the princess in the story of the Goose-Girl,--

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdkin's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales and rocks,
Away be it whirled,
Till the silvery locks
Are all combed and curled."

This made her laugh so that she tumbled into a clover-bed, and lay there a minute to get her breath. Just then, as if the playful wind repented of its frolic, the long veil fastened to the hat caught in a

blackberry-vine near by, and held the truant fast till Marjorie secured it.

"Now come and see what I am doing," said the lady, when she had thanked the child.

Marjorie drew near confidingly, and looked down at the wide-spread book before her. She gave a start, and laughed out with surprise and delight; for there was a lovely picture of her own little home, and her own little self on the door-step, all so delicate, and beautiful, and true, it seemed as if done by magic.

"Oh, how pretty! There is Rover, and Kitty and the robins, and me! How could you ever do it, ma'am?" said Marjorie, with a wondering glance at the long paint-brush, which had wrought what seemed a miracle to her childish eyes.

"I'll show you presently; but tell me, first, if it looks quite right and natural to you. Children sometimes spy out faults that no one else can see," answered the lady, evidently pleased with the artless praise her work received.

"It looks just like our house, only more beautiful. Perhaps that is because I know how shabby it really is. That moss looks lovely on the shingles, but the roof leaks. The porch is broken, only the roses hide the place; and my gown is all faded, though it once was as bright as you have made it. I wish the house and everything would stay pretty forever, as they will in the picture."

While Marjorie spoke, the lady had been adding more color to the sketch, and when she looked up, something warmer and brighter than sunshine shone in her face, as she said, so cheerily, it was like a bird's song to hear her,--

"It can't be summer always, dear, but we can make fair weather for ourselves if we try. The moss, the roses, and soft shadows show the little house and the little girl at their best, and that is what we all should do; for it is amazing how lovely common things become, if one only knows how to look at them."

"I wish I did," said Marjorie, half to herself, remembering how often she was discontented, and how hard it was to get on, sometimes.

"So do I," said the lady, in her happy voice. "Just believe that there is a sunny side to everything, and try to find it, and you will be surprised to see how bright the world will seem, and how cheerful you will be able to keep your little self."

"I guess granny has found that out, for she never frets. I do, but I'm going to stop it, because I'm twelve to-day, and that is too old for such things," said Marjorie, recollecting the good resolutions she had made that morning when she woke.

"I am twice twelve, and not entirely cured yet; but I try, and don't mean to wear blue spectacles if I can help it," answered the lady, laughing so blithely that Marjorie was sure she would not have to try much longer. "Birthdays were made for presents, and I should like to give you one. Would it please you to have this little picture?" she added, lifting it out of the book.

"Truly my own? Oh, yes, indeed!" cried Marjorie, coloring with pleasure, for she had never owned so beautiful a thing before.

"Then you shall have it, dear. Hang it where you can see it often, and when you look, remember that it is the sunny side of home, and help to keep it so."

Marjorie had nothing but a kiss to offer by way of thanks, as the lovely sketch was put into her hand; but the giver seemed quite satisfied, for it was a very grateful little kiss. Then the child took up her basket and went away, not dancing and singing now, but slowly and silently; for this gift made her thoughtful as well as glad. As she climbed the wall, she looked back to nod good-by to the pretty lady; but the meadow was empty, and all she saw was the grass blowing in the wind.

"Now, deary, run out and play, for birthdays come but once a year, and we must make them as merry as we can," said granny, as she settled herself for her afternoon nap, when the Saturday cleaning was all done, and the little house as neat as wax.

So Marjorie put on a white apron in honor of the occasion, and, taking Kitty in her arms, went out to enjoy herself. Three swings on the gate seemed to be a good way of beginning the festivities; but she only got two, for when the gate creaked back the second time, it stayed shut, and Marjorie hung over the pickets, arrested by the sound of music.

"It's soldiers," she said, as the fife and drum drew nearer, and flags were seen waving over the barberry-bushes at the corner.

"No; it's a picnic," she added in a moment; for she saw hats with wreaths about them bobbing up and down, as a gayly-trimmed hay-cart full of children came rumbling down the lane.

"What a nice time they are going to have!" thought Marjorie, sadly contrasting that merry-making with the quiet party she was having all by herself.

Suddenly her face shone, and Kitty was waved over her head like a banner, as she flew out of the gate, crying, rapturously,--

"It's Billy! and I know he's come for me!"

It certainly WAS Billy, proudly driving the old horse, and beaming at his little friend from the bower of flags and chestnut-boughs, where he sat in state, with a crown of daisies on his sailor-hat and a spray of blooming sweetbrier in his hand. Waving his rustic sceptre, he led off the shout of "Happy birthday, Marjorie!" which was set up as the wagon stopped at the gate, and the green boughs suddenly blossomed with familiar faces, all smiling on the little damsel, who stood in the lane quite overpowered with delight.

"It's a s'prise party!" cried one small lad, tumbling out behind.

"We are going up the mountain to have fun!" added a chorus of voices, as a dozen hands beckoned wildly.

"We got it up on purpose for you, so tie your hat and come away," said a pretty girl, leaning down to kiss Marjorie, who had dropped Kitty, and stood ready for any splendid enterprise.

A word to granny, and away went the happy child, sitting up beside Billy, under the flags that waved over a happier load than any royal chariot ever bore.

It would be vain to try and tell all the plays and pleasures of happy children on a Saturday afternoon, but we may briefly say that Marjorie found a mossy stone all ready for her throne, and Billy crowned her with a garland like his own. That a fine banquet was spread, and eaten with a relish many a Lord Mayor's feast has lacked. Then how the whole court danced and played together afterward! The lords climbed trees and turned somersaults, the ladies gathered flowers and told secrets under the sweetfern-bushes, the queen lost her shoe jumping over the waterfall, and the king paddled into the pool below and rescued it. A happy little kingdom, full of summer sunshine, innocent delights, and loyal hearts; for love ruled, and the only war that disturbed the peaceful land was waged by the mosquitoes as night came on.

Marjorie stood on her throne watching the sunset while her maids of honor packed up the remains of the banquet, and her knights prepared the chariot. All the sky was gold and purple, all the world bathed in a soft, red light, and the little girl was very happy as she looked down at the subjects who had served her so faithfully that day.

"Have you had a good time, Marjy?" asked King William; who stood below, with his royal nose on a level with her majesty's two dusty little shoes.

"Oh, Billy, it has been just splendid! But I don't see why you should all be so kind to me," answered Marjorie, with such a look of innocent wonder, that Billy laughed to see it.

"Because you are so sweet and good, we can't help loving you,--that's why," he said, as if this simple fact was reason enough.

"I'm going to be the best girl that ever was, and love everybody in the world," cried the child, stretching out her arms as if ready, in the fulness of her happy heart, to embrace all creation.

"Don't turn into an angel and fly away just yet, but come home, or granny will never lend you to us any more."

With that, Billy jumped her down, and away they ran, to ride gayly back through the twilight, singing like a flock of nightingales.

As she went to bed that night, Marjorie looked at the red bank, the pretty picture, and the daisy crown, saying to herself,--

"It has been a very nice birthday, and I am something like the girl in the story, after all, for the old man gave me a good-luck penny, the kind lady told me how to keep happy, and Billy came for me like the prince. The girl didn't go back to the poor house again, but I'm glad I did, for my granny isn't a cross one, and my little home is the dearest in the world."

Then she tied her night-cap, said her prayers, and fell asleep; but the moon, looking in to kiss the blooming face upon the pillow, knew that three good spirits had come to help little Marjorie from that day forth, and their names were Industry, Cheerfulness, and Love.

ROSES AND FORGET-ME-NOTS

ROSES

It was a cold November storm, and everything looked forlorn. Even the pert sparrows were draggletailed and too much out of spirits to fight for crumbs with the fat pigeons who tripped through the mud with their little red boots as if in haste to get back to their cosy home in the dove-cot.

But the most forlorn creature out that day was a small errand girl, with a bonnet-box on each arm, and both hands struggling to hold a big broken umbrella. A pair of worn-out boots let in the wet upon her tired feet; a thin cotton dress and an old shawl poorly protected her from the storm; and a faded hood covered her head.

The face that looked out from this hood was too pale and anxious for one so young; and when a sudden gust turned the old umbrella inside out with a crash, despair fell upon poor Lizzie, and she was so miserable she could have sat down in the rain and cried.

But there was no time for tears; so, dragging the dilapidated umbrella along, she spread her shawl over the bonnet-boxes and hurried down the broad street, eager to hide her misfortunes from a pretty young girl who stood at a window laughing at her.

She could not find the number of the house where one of the fine hats was to be left; and after hunting all down one side of the street, she crossed over, and came at last to the very house where the pretty girl lived. She was no longer to be seen; and, with a sigh of relief, Lizzie rang the bell, and was told to wait in the hall while Miss Belle tried the hat on.

Glad to rest, she warmed her feet, righted her umbrella, and then sat looking about her with eyes quick to see the beauty and the comfort that made the place so homelike and delightful. A small waiting-room opened from the hall, and in it stood many blooming plants, whose fragrance attracted Lizzie as irresistibly as if she had been a butterfly or bee.

Slipping in, she stood enjoying the lovely colors, sweet odors, and delicate shapes of these household spirits; for Lizzie loved flowers passionately; and just then they possessed a peculiar charm for her.

One particularly captivating little rose won her heart, and made her long for it with a longing that became a temptation too strong to resist. It was so perfect; so like a rosy face smiling out from the green leaves, that Lizzie could not keep her hands off it, and having smelt, touched, and kissed it, she suddenly broke the stem and hid it in her pocket. Then, frightened at what she had done, she crept back to her place in the hall, and sat there, burdened with remorse.

A servant came just then to lead her upstairs; for Miss Belle wished the hat altered, and must give directions. With her heart in a flutter, and pinker roses in her cheeks than the one in her pocket, Lizzie followed to a handsome room, where a pretty girl stood before a long mirror with the hat in her hand.

"Tell Madame Tiffany that I don't like it at all, for she hasn't put in the blue plume mamma ordered; and I won't have rose-buds, they are so common," said the young lady, in a dissatisfied tone, as she twirled the hat about.

"Yes, miss," was all Lizzie could say; for SHE considered that hat the loveliest thing a girl could possibly own.

"You had better ask your mamma about it, Miss Belle, before you give any orders. She will be up in a few moments, and the girl can wait," put in a maid, who was sewing in the ante-room.

"I suppose I must; but I WON'T have roses," answered Belle, crossly. Then she glanced at Lizzie, and said more gently, "You look very cold; come and sit by the fire while you wait."

"I'm afraid I'll wet the pretty rug, miss; my feet are sopping," said Lizzie, gratefully, but timidly.

"So they are! Why didn't you wear rubber boots?"

"I haven't got any."

"I'll give you mine, then, for I hate them; and as I never go out in wet weather, they are of no earthly use to me. Marie, bring them here; I shall be glad to get rid of them, and I'm sure they'll be useful to you."

"Oh, thank you, miss! I'd like 'em ever so much, for I'm out in the rain half the time, and get bad colds because my boots are old," said Lizzie, smiling brightly at the thought of the welcome gift.

"I should think your mother would get you warmer things," began Belle, who found something rather interesting in the shabby girl, with shy bright eyes, and curly hair bursting out of the old hood.

"I haven't got any mother," said Lizzie, with a pathetic glance at her poor clothes.

"I'm so sorry! Have you brothers and sisters?" asked Belle, hoping to find something pleasant to talk about; for she was a kind little soul.

"No, miss; I've got no folks at all."

"Oh, dear; how sad! Why, who takes care of you?" cried Belle, looking quite distressed.

"No one; I take care of myself. I work for Madame, and she pays me a dollar a week. I stay with Mrs. Brown, and chore round to pay for my keep. My dollar don't get many clothes, so I can't be as neat as I'd like." And the forlorn look came back to poor Lizzie's face.

Belle said nothing, but sat among the sofa cushions, where she had thrown herself, looking soberly at this other girl, no older than she was, who took care of herself and was all alone in the world. It was a new idea to Belle, who was loved and petted as an only child is apt to be. She often saw beggars and pitied them, but knew very little about their wants and lives; so it was like turning a new page in her happy life to be brought so near to poverty as this chance meeting with the milliner's girl.

"Aren't you afraid and lonely and unhappy?" she said, slowly, trying to understand and put herself in Lizzie's place.

"Yes; but it's no use. I can't help it, and may be things will get better by and by, and I'll have my wish," answered Lizzie, more hopefully, because Belle's pity warmed her heart and made her troubles seem

lighter.

"What is your wish?" asked Belle, hoping mamma wouldn't come just yet, for she was getting interested in the stranger.

"To have a nice little room, and make flowers, like a French girl I know. It's such pretty work, and she gets lots of money, for every one likes her flowers. She shows me how, sometimes, and I can do leaves first-rate; but--"

There Lizzie stopped suddenly, and the color rushed up to her forehead; for she remembered the little rose in her pocket and it weighed upon her conscience like a stone.

Before Belle could ask what was the matter, Marie came in with a tray of cake and fruit, saying:

"Here's your lunch, Miss Belle."

"Put it down, please; I'm not ready for it yet."

And Belle shook her head as she glanced at Lizzie, who was staring hard at the fire with such a troubled face that Belle could not bear to see it.

Jumping out of her nest of cushions, she heaped a plate with good things, and going to Lizzie, offered it, saying, with a gentle courtesy that made the act doubly sweet:

"Please have some; you must be tired of waiting."

But Lizzie could not take it; she could only cover her face and cry; for this kindness rent her heart and made the stolen flower a burden too heavy to be borne.

"Oh, don't cry so! Are you sick? Have I been rude? Tell me all about it; and if I can't do anything, mamma can," said Belle, surprised and troubled.

"No; I'm not sick; I'm bad, and I can't bear it when you are so good to me," sobbed Lizzie, quite overcome with penitence; and taking out the crumpled rose, she confessed her fault with many tears.

"Don't feel so much about such a little thing as that," began Belle, warmly; then checked herself, and added, more soberly, "It WAS wrong to take it without leave; but it's all right now, and I'll give you as many roses as you want, for I know you are a good girl."

"Thank you. I didn't want it only because it was pretty, but I wanted to copy it. I can't get any for myself, and so I can't do my make-believe ones well. Madame won't even lend me the old ones in the store, and Estelle has none to spare for me, because I can't pay her for teaching me. She gives me bits of muslin and wire and things, and shows me now and then. But I know if I had a real flower I could copy it; so she'd see I did know something, for I try real hard. I'm SO tired of slopping round the streets, I'd do anything to earn my living some other way."

Lizzie had poured out her trouble rapidly; and the little story was quite affecting when one saw the tears on her cheeks, the poor clothes, and the thin hands that held the stolen rose. Belle was much touched, and, in her impetuous way, set about mending matters as fast as possible.

"Put on those boots and that pair of dry stockings right away. Then tuck as much cake and fruit into your pocket as it will hold. I'm going to get you some flowers, and see if mamma is too busy to attend to me."

With a nod and a smile, Belle flew about the room a minute; then vanished, leaving Lizzie to her comfortable task, feeling as if fairies still haunted the world as in the good old times.

When Belle came back with a handful of roses, she found Lizzie absorbed in admiring contemplation of her new boots, as she ate sponge-cake in a blissful sort of waking-dream.

"Mamma can't come; but I don't care about the hat. It will do very well, and isn't worth fussing about. There, will those be of any use to you?" And she offered the nosegay with a much happier face than the one Lizzie first saw.

"Oh, miss, they're just lovely! I'll copy that pink rose as soon as ever I can, and when I've learned how to do 'em tip-top, I'd like to bring you some, if you don't mind," answered Lizzie, smiling all over her face as she buried her nose luxuriously in the fragrant mass.

"I'd like it very much, for I should think you'd have to be very clever to make such pretty things. I really quite fancy those rosebuds in my hat, now I know that you're going to learn how to make them. Put an orange in your pocket, and the flowers in water as soon as you can, so they'll be fresh when you want them. Good-by. Bring home our hats every time and tell me how you get on."

With kind words like these, Belle dismissed Lizzie, who ran downstairs, feeling as rich as if she had found a fortune. Away to the next place she hurried, anxious to get her errands done and the precious posy safely into fresh water. But Mrs. Turretville was not at home, and the bonnet could not be left till paid for. So Lizzie turned to go down the high steps, glad that she need not wait. She stopped one instant to take a delicious sniff at her flowers, and that was the last happy moment that poor Lizzie knew for many weary months.

The new boots were large for her, the steps slippery with sleet, and down went the little errand girl, from top to bottom, till she landed in the gutter directly upon Mrs. Turretville's costly bonnet.

"I've saved my posies, anyway," sighed Lizzie, as she picked herself up, bruised, wet, and faint with pain; "but, oh, my heart! won't Madame scold when she sees that band-box smashed flat," groaned the poor child, sitting on the curbstone to get her breath and view the disaster.

The rain poured, the wind blew, the sparrows on the park railing chirped derisively, and no one came along to help Lizzie out of her troubles. Slowly she gathered up her burdens; painfully she limped away in the big boots; and the last the naughty sparrows saw of her was a shabby little figure going round the corner, with a pale, tearful face held lovingly over the bright bouquet that was her one treasure and her only comfort in the moment which brought to her the great misfortune of her life.

II

FORGET-ME-NOTS

"Oh, mamma, I am so relieved that the box has come at last! If it had not, I do believe I should have died of disappointment," cried pretty Belle, five years later, on the morning before her eighteenth birthday.

"It would have been a serious disappointment, darling; for I had set my heart on your wearing my gift to-morrow night, and when the steamers kept coming in without my trunk from Paris, I was very anxious. I hope you will like it."

"Dear mamma, I know I shall like it; your taste is so good and you know what suits me so well. Make haste, Marie; I'm dying to see it," said Belle, dancing about the great trunk, as the maid carefully unfolded tissue papers and muslin wrappers.

A young girl's first ball-dress is a grand affair,--in her eyes, at least; and Belle soon stopped dancing, to stand with clasped hands, eager eyes and parted lips before the snowy pile of illusion that was at last daintily lifted out upon the bed. Then, as Marie displayed its loveliness, little cries of delight were heard, and when the whole delicate dress was arranged to the best effect she threw herself upon her mother's neck and actually cried with pleasure.

"Mamma, it is too lovely I and you are very kind to do so much for me. How shall I ever thank you?"

"By putting it right on to see if it fits; and when you wear it look your happiest, that I may be proud of my pretty daughter."

Mamma got no further, for Marie uttered a French shriek, wrung her hands, and then began to burrow wildly in the trunk and among the papers, crying distractedly:

"Great Heavens, madame! the wreath has been forgotten! What an affliction! Mademoiselle's enchanting toilette is destroyed without the wreath, and nowhere do I find it."

In vain they searched; in vain Marie wailed and Belle declared it must be somewhere; no wreath appeared. It was duly set down in the bill, and a fine sum charged for a head-dress to match the dainty forget-me-nots that looped the fleecy skirts and ornamented the bosom of the dress. It had evidently been forgotten; and mamma despatched Marie at once to try and match the flowers, for Belle would not hear of any other decoration for her beautiful blonde hair.

The dress fitted to a charm, and was pronounced by all beholders the loveliest thing ever seen. Nothing was wanted but the wreath to make it quite perfect, and when Marie returned, after a long search, with no forget-me-nots, Belle was in despair.

"Wear natural ones," suggested a sympathizing friend.

But another hunt among greenhouses was as fruitless as that among the milliners' rooms. No forget-me-nots could be found, and Marie fell exhausted into a chair, desolated at what she felt to be an awful calamity.

"Let me have the carriage, and I'll ransack the city till I find some," cried Belle, growing more resolute with each failure.

Mamma was deep in preparations for the ball, and could not help her afflicted daughter, though she was much disappointed at the mishap. So Belle drove off, resolved to have her flowers whether there were any or not.

Any one who has ever tried to match a ribbon, find a certain fabric, or get anything done in a hurry, knows what a wearisome task it sometimes is, and can imagine Belle's state of mind after repeated disappointments. She was about to give up in despair, when some one suggested that perhaps the Frenchwoman, Estelle Valnor, might make the desired wreath, if there was time.

Away drove Belle, and, on entering the room, gave a sigh of satisfaction, for a whole boxful of the loveliest forget-me-nots stood upon the table. As fast as possible, she told her tale and demanded the flowers, no matter what the price might be. Imagine her feelings when the Frenchwoman, with a shrug, announced that it was impossible to give mademoiselle a single spray. All were engaged to trim a bridesmaid's dress, and must be sent away at once.

It really was too bad! and Belle lost her temper entirely, for no persuasion or bribes would win a spray from Estelle. The provoking part of it was that the wedding would not come off for several days, and there was time enough to make more flowers for that dress, since Belle only wanted a few for her hair. Neither would Estelle make her any, as her hands were full, and so small an order was not worth deranging one's self for; but observing Belle's sorrowful face, she said, affably:

"Mademoiselle may, perhaps, find the flowers she desires at Miss Berton's. She has been helping me with these garlands, and may have some left. Here is her address."

Belle took the card with thanks, and hurried away with a last hope faintly stirring in her girlish heart, for Belle had an unusually ardent wish to look her best at this party, since Somebody was to be there, and Somebody considered forget-me-nots the sweetest flowers in the world. Mamma knew this, and the kiss Belle gave her when the dress came had a more tender meaning than gratified vanity or daughterly love.

Up many stairs she climbed, and came at last to a little room, very poor but very neat, where, at the one window, sat a young girl, with crutches by her side and her lap full of flower-leaves and petals. She rose slowly as Belle came in, and then stood looking at her, with such a wistful expression in her shy, bright eyes, that Belle's anxious face cleared involuntarily, and her voice lost its impatient tone.

As she spoke, she glanced about the room, hoping to see some blue blossoms awaiting her. But none appeared; and she was about to despond again, when the girl said, gently:

"I have none by me now, but I may be able to find you some."

"Thank you very much; but I have been everywhere in vain. Still, if you do get any, please send them to me as soon as possible. Here is my card."

Miss Berton glanced at it, then cast a quick look at the sweet, anxious face before her, and smiled so brightly that Belle smiled also, and asked, wonderingly:

"What is it? What do you see?"

"I see the dear young lady who was so kind to me long ago. You don't remember me, and never knew

my name; but I never have forgotten you all these years. I always hoped I could do something to show how grateful I was, and now I can, for you shall have your flowers if I sit up all night to make them."

But Belle still shook her head and watched the smiling face before her with wondering eyes, till the girl added, with sudden color in her cheeks:

"Ah, you've done so many kind things in your life, you don't remember the little errand girl from Madame Tiffany's who stole a rose in your hall, and how you gave her rubber boots and cake and flowers, and were so good to her she couldn't forget it if she lived to be a hundred."

"But you are so changed," began Belle, who did faintly recollect that little incident in her happy life.

"Yes, I had a fall and hurt myself so that I shall always be lame."

And Lizzie went on to tell how Madame had dismissed her in a rage; how she lay ill till Mrs. Brown sent her to the hospital; and how for a year she had suffered much alone, in that great house of pain, before one of the kind visitors had befriended her.

While hearing the story of the five years, that had been so full of pleasure, ease and love for herself, Belle forgot her errand, and, sitting beside Lizzie, listened with pitying eyes to all she told of her endeavors to support herself by the delicate handiwork she loved.

"I'm very happy now," ended Lizzie, looking about the little bare room with a face full of the sweetest content. "I get nearly work enough to pay my way, and Estelle sends me some when she has more than she can do. I've learned to do it nicely, and it is so pleasant to sit here and make flowers instead of trudging about in the wet with other people's hats. Though I do sometimes wish I was able to trudge, one gets on so slowly with crutches."

A little sigh followed the words, and Belle put her own plump hand on the delicate one that held the crutch, saying, in her cordial young voice:

"I'll come and take you to drive sometimes, for you are too pale, and you'll get ill sitting here at work day after day. Please let me; I'd love to; for I feel so idle and wicked when I see busy people like you that I reproach myself for neglecting my duty and having more than my share of happiness."

Lizzie thanked her with a look, and then said, in a tone of interest that was delightful to hear:

"Tell about the wreath you want; I should so love to do it for you, if I can."

Belle had forgotten all about it in listening to this sad little story of a girl's life. Now she felt half ashamed to talk of so frivolous a matter till she remembered that it would help Lizzie; and, resolving to pay for it as never garland was paid for before, she entered upon the subject with renewed interest.

"You shall have the flowers in time for your ball to-morrow night. I will engage to make a wreath that will please you, only it may take longer than I think. Don't be troubled if I don't send it till evening; it will surely come in time. I can work fast, and this will be the happiest job I ever did," said Lizzie, beginning to lay out mysterious little tools and bend delicate wires.

"You are altogether too grateful for the little I have done. It makes me feel ashamed to think I did not

find you out before and do something better worth thanks."

"Ah, it wasn't the boots or the cake or the roses, dear Miss Belle. It was the kind looks, the gentle words, the way it was done, that went right to my heart, and did me more good than a million of money. I never stole a pin after that day, for the little rose wouldn't let me forget how you forgave me so sweetly. I sometimes think it kept me from greater temptations, for I was a poor, forlorn child, with no one to keep me good."

Pretty Belle looked prettier than ever as she listened, and a bright tear stood in either eye like a drop of dew on a blue flower. It touched her very much to learn that her little act of childish charity had been so sweet and helpful to this lonely girl, and now lived so freshly in her grateful memory. It showed her, suddenly, how precious little deeds of love and sympathy are; how strong to bless, how easy to perform, how comfortable to recall. Her heart was very full and tender just then, and the lesson sunk deep into it never to be forgotten.

She sat a long time watching flowers bud and blossom under Lizzie's skilful fingers, and then hurried home to tell all her glad news to mamma.

If the next day had not been full of most delightfully exciting events, Belle might have felt some anxiety about her wreath, for hour after hour went by and nothing arrived from Lizzie.

Evening came, and all was ready. Belle was dressed, and looked so lovely that mamma declared she needed nothing more. But Marie insisted that the grand effect would be ruined without the garland among the sunshiny hair. Belle had time now to be anxious, and waited with growing impatience for the finishing touch to her charming toilette.

"I must be downstairs to receive, and can't wait another moment; so put in the blue pompon and let me go," she said at last, with a sigh of disappointment, for the desire to look beautiful that night in Somebody's eyes had increased four-fold.

With a tragic gesture, Marie was about to adjust the pompon when the quick tap of a crutch came down the hall, and Lizzie hurried in, flushed and breathless, but smiling happily as she uncovered the box she carried with a look of proud satisfaction.

A general "Ah!" of admiration arose as Belle, mamma, and Marie surveyed the lovely wreath that lay before them; and when it was carefully arranged on the bright head that was to wear it, Belle blushed with pleasure. Mamma said: "It is more beautiful than any Paris could have sent us;" and Marie clasped her hands theatrically, sighing, with her head on one side:

"Truly, yes; mademoiselle is now adorable!"

"I am so glad you like it. I did my very best and worked all night, but I had to beg one spray from Estelle, or, with all my haste, I could not have finished in time," said Lizzie, refreshing her weary eyes with a long, affectionate gaze at the pretty figure before her.

A fold of the airy skirt was caught on one of the blue clusters, and Lizzie knelt down to arrange it as she spoke. Belle leaned toward her and said softly: "Money alone can't pay you for this kindness; so tell me how I can best serve you. This is the happiest night of my life, and I want to make every one feel glad also."

"Then don't talk of paying me, but promise that I may make the flowers you wear on your wedding-day," whispered Lizzie, kissing the kind hand held out to help her rise, for on it she saw a brilliant ring, and in the blooming, blushing face bent over her she read the tender little story that Somebody had told Belle that day.

"So you shall! and I'll keep this wreath all my life for your sake, dear," answered Belle, as her full heart bubbled over with pitying affection for the poor girl who would never make a bridal garland for herself.

Belle kept her word, even when she was in a happy home of her own; for out of the dead roses bloomed a friendship that brightened Lizzie's life; and long after the blue garland was faded Belle remembered the helpful little lesson that taught her to read the faces poverty touches with a pathetic eloquence, which says to those who look, "Forget-me-not."

WILD DUCK

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Sun-Up and Other Poems*, by Lola Ridge

I

That was a great night we spied upon
See-sawing home,
Singing a hot sweet song to the super-stars
Shuffling off behind the smoke-haze...
Fog-horns sentimentalizing on the river...
Lights dwindling to shining slits
In the wet asphalt...
Purring lights... red and green and golden-whiskered...
Digging daintily pointed claws in the soft mud...
... But you did not know...
As the trains made golden augers
Boring in the darkness...
How my heart kept racing out along the rails,
As a spider runs along a thread
And hauls him in again
To some drawing point...
You did not know
How wild ducks' wings
Itch at dawn...
How at dawn the necks of wild ducks
Arch to the sun
And new-mown air
Trickles sweet in their gullets.

II

As water, cleared of the reflection of a bird
That has lately flown across it,

Yet trembles with the beating of its wings,
So my soul... emptied of the known you... utterly...
Is yet vibrant with the cadence of the song
You might have been....
'Twas a great night...
With never a waste look over a shoulder
Curved to the crook of the wind...
And a great word we threw
For memory to play knuckles with...
A word the waters of the world have washed,
Leaving it stark and without smell...
A world that rattles well in emptiness: Good-by.

The Lifted Veil

by George Eliot

Chapter I

The time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of angina pectoris; and in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may fairly hope that my life will not be protracted many months. Unless, then, I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burthen of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise—if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for—I should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true provision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on September 20, 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope. Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame rising in the fire, and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell, and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one will answer my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My housekeeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery-maid is asleep on a bench: she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases: my lamp goes out with a horrible stench: I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown: the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be weary of it: I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation—and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through my chamber-window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air—will darkness close over them for ever?

Darkness—darkness—no pain—nothing but darkness: but I am passing on and on through the darkness: my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward . . .

Before that time comes, I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of

my experience. I have never fully unbosomed myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow-men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some tenderness, some charity, when we are dead: it is the living only who cannot be forgiven—the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it—it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn towards you with moist, timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition—make haste—oppress it with your ill-considered judgements, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by and by be still—"ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit"; the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as from all work. Then your charitable speeches may find vent; then you may remember and pity the toil and the struggle and the failure; then you may give due honour to the work achieved; then you may find extenuation for errors, and may consent to bury them.

That is a trivial schoolboy text; why do I dwell on it? It has little reference to me, for I shall leave no works behind me for men to honour. I have no near relatives who will make up, by weeping over my grave, for the wounds they inflicted on me when I was among them. It is only the story of my life that will perhaps win a little more sympathy from strangers when I am dead, than I ever believed it would obtain from my friends while I was living.

My childhood perhaps seems happier to me than it really was, by contrast with all the after-years. For then the curtain of the future was as impenetrable to me as to other children: I had all their delight in the present hour, their sweet indefinite hopes for the morrow; and I had a tender mother: even now, after the dreary lapse of long years, a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress as she held me on her knee—her arms round my little body, her cheek pressed on mine. I had a complaint of the eyes that made me blind for a little while, and she kept me on her knee from morning till night. That unequalled love soon vanished out of my life, and even to my childish consciousness it was as if that life had become more chill I rode my little white pony with the groom by my side as before, but there were no loving eyes looking at me as I mounted, no glad arms opened to me when I came back. Perhaps I missed my mother's love more than most children of seven or eight would have done, to whom the other pleasures of life remained as before; for I was certainly a very sensitive child. I remember still the mingled trepidation and delicious excitement with which I was affected by the tramping of the horses on the pavement in the echoing stables, by the loud resonance of the groom's voices, by the booming bark of the dogs as my father's carriage thundered under the archway of the courtyard, by the din of the gong as it gave notice of luncheon and dinner. The measured tramp of soldiery which I sometimes heard—for my father's house lay near a county town where there were large barracks—made me sob and tremble; and yet when they were gone past, I longed for them to come back again.

I fancy my father thought me an odd child, and had little fondness for me; though he was very careful in fulfilling what he regarded as a parent's duties. But he was already past the middle of life, and I was not his only son. My mother had been his second wife, and he was five- and-forty when he married her. He was a firm, unbending, intensely orderly man, in root and stem a banker, but with a flourishing graft of the active landholder, aspiring to county influence: one of those people who are always like themselves from day to day, who are uninfluenced by the weather, and neither know melancholy nor high spirits. I held him in great awe, and appeared more timid and sensitive in his presence than at other times; a circumstance which, perhaps, helped to confirm him in the intention to educate me on a

different plan from the prescriptive one with which he had complied in the case of my elder brother, already a tall youth at Eton. My brother was to be his representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for the sake of making connexions, of course: my father was not a man to underrate the bearing of Latin satirists or Greek dramatists on the attainment of an aristocratic position. But, intrinsically, he had slight esteem for "those dead but sceptred spirits"; having qualified himself for forming an independent opinion by reading Potter's AEschylus, and dipping into Francis's Horace. To this negative view he added a positive one, derived from a recent connexion with mining speculations; namely, that a scientific education was the really useful training for a younger son. Moreover, it was clear that a shy, sensitive boy like me was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school. Mr. Letherall had said so very decidedly. Mr. Letherall was a large man in spectacles, who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, auspicious manner—then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows—

"The deficiency is there, sir—there; and here," he added, touching the upper sides of my head, "here is the excess. That must be brought out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep."

I was in a state of tremor, partly at the vague idea that I was the object of reprobation, partly in the agitation of my first hatred—hatred of this big, spectacled man, who pulled my head about as if he wanted to buy and cheapen it.

I am not aware how much Mr. Letherall had to do with the system afterwards adopted towards me, but it was presently clear that private tutors, natural history, science, and the modern languages, were the appliances by which the defects of my organization were to be remedied. I was very stupid about machines, so I was to be greatly occupied with them; I had no memory for classification, so it was particularly necessary that I should study systematic zoology and botany; I was hungry for human deeds and humane motions, so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers, the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. A better-constituted boy would certainly have profited under my intelligent tutors, with their scientific apparatus; and would, doubtless, have found the phenomena of electricity and magnetism as fascinating as I was, every Thursday, assured they were. As it was, I could have paired off, for ignorance of whatever was taught me, with the worst Latin scholar that was ever turned out of a classical academy. I read Plutarch, and Shakespeare, and Don Quixote by the sly, and supplied myself in that way with wandering thoughts, while my tutor was assuring me that "an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran downhill." I had no desire to be this improved man; I was glad of the running water; I could watch it and listen to it gurgling among the pebbles, and bathing the bright green water-plants, by the hour together. I did not want to know why it ran; I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful.

There is no need to dwell on this part of my life. I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development. When I was sixteen I was sent to Geneva to complete my course of education; and the change was a very happy one to me, for the first sight of the Alps, with the setting sun on them, as we descended the Jura, seemed to me like an entrance into heaven; and the three years of my life there were spent in a perpetual sense of exaltation, as if from a draught of delicious wine, at the presence of Nature in all her awful loveliness. You will think, perhaps, that I must have been a poet, from this early sensibility to Nature. But my lot was not so happy as that. A poet pours forth his song and believes in the listening ear and answering soul, to which his song will be floated sooner or later.

But the poet's sensibility without his voice—the poet's sensibility that finds no vent but in silent tears on the sunny bank, when the noonday light sparkles on the water, or in an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye—this dumb passion brings with it a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one's fellow-men. My least solitary moments were those in which I pushed off in my boat, at evening, towards the centre of the lake; it seemed to me that the sky, and the glowing mountain-tops, and the wide blue water, surrounded me with a cherishing love such as no human face had shed on me since my mother's love had vanished out of my life. I used to do as Jean Jacques did—lie down in my boat and let it glide where it would, while I looked up at the departing glow leaving one mountain-top after the other, as if the prophet's chariot of fire were passing over them on its way to the home of light. Then, when the white summits were all sad and corpse-like, I had to push homeward, for I was under careful surveillance, and was allowed no late wanderings. This disposition of mine was not favourable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths of my own age who are always to be found studying at Geneva. Yet I made one such friendship; and, singularly enough, it was with a youth whose intellectual tendencies were the very reverse of my own. I shall call him Charles Meunier; his real surname—an English one, for he was of English extraction—having since become celebrated. He was an orphan, who lived on a miserable pittance while he pursued the medical studies for which he had a special genius. Strange! that with my vague mind, susceptible and unobservant, hating inquiry and given up to contemplation, I should have been drawn towards a youth whose strongest passion was science. But the bond was not an intellectual one; it came from a source that can happily blend the stupid with the brilliant, the dreamy with the practical: it came from community of feeling. Charles was poor and ugly, derided by Genevese gamins, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms. I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause, and, stimulated by a sympathetic resentment, I made timid advances towards him. It is enough to say that there sprang up as much comradeship between us as our different habits would allow; and in Charles's rare holidays we went up the Saleve together, or took the boat to Vevay, while I listened dreamily to the monologues in which he unfolded his bold conceptions of future experiment and discovery. I mingled them confusedly in my thought with glimpses of blue water and delicate floating cloud, with the notes of birds and the distant glitter of the glacier. He knew quite well that my mind was half absent, yet he liked to talk to me in this way; for don't we talk of our hopes and our projects even to dogs and birds, when they love us? I have mentioned this one friendship because of its connexion with a strange and terrible scene which I shall have to narrate in my subsequent life.

This happier life at Geneva was put an end to by a severe illness, which is partly a blank to me, partly a time of dimly-remembered suffering, with the presence of my father by my bed from time to time. Then came the languid monotony of convalescence, the days gradually breaking into variety and distinctness as my strength enabled me to take longer and longer drives. On one of these more vividly remembered days, my father said to me, as he sat beside my sofa—

"When you are quite well enough to travel, Latimer, I shall take you home with me. The journey will amuse you and do you good, for I shall go through the Tyrol and Austria, and you will see many new places. Our neighbours, the Filmores, are come; Alfred will join us at Basle, and we shall all go together to Vienna, and back by Prague" . . .

My father was called away before he had finished his sentence, and he left my mind resting on the word Prague, with a strange sense that a new and wondrous scene was breaking upon me: a city under the broad sunshine, that seemed to me as if it were the summer sunshine of a long- past century arrested in its course—unrefreshed for ages by dews of night, or the rushing rain-cloud; scorching the dusty, weary, time-eaten grandeur of a people doomed to live on in the stale repetition of memories, like deposed and superannuated kings in their regal gold-inwoven tatters. The city looked so thirsty that the

broad river seemed to me a sheet of metal; and the blackened statues, as I passed under their blank gaze, along the unending bridge, with their ancient garments and their saintly crowns, seemed to me the real inhabitants and owners of this place, while the busy, trivial men and women, hurrying to and fro, were a swarm of ephemeral visitants infesting it for a day. It is such grim, stony beings as these, I thought, who are the fathers of ancient faded children, in those tanned time-fretted dwellings that crowd the steep before me; who pay their court in the worn and crumbling pomp of the palace which stretches its monotonous length on the height; who worship wearily in the stifling air of the churches, urged by no fear or hope, but compelled by their doom to be ever old and undying, to live on in the rigidity of habit, as they live on in perpetual midday, without the repose of night or the new birth of morning.

A stunning clang of metal suddenly thrilled through me, and I became conscious of the objects in my room again: one of the fire-irons had fallen as Pierre opened the door to bring me my draught. My heart was palpitating violently, and I begged Pierre to leave my draught beside me; I would take it presently.

As soon as I was alone again, I began to ask myself whether I had been sleeping. Was this a dream—this wonderfully distinct vision—minute in its distinctness down to a patch of rainbow light on the pavement, transmitted through a coloured lamp in the shape of a star—of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination? I had seen no picture of Prague: it lay in my mind as a mere name, with vaguely-remembered historical associations—ill-defined memories of imperial grandeur and religious wars.

Nothing of this sort had ever occurred in my dreaming experience before, for I had often been humiliated because my dreams were only saved from being utterly disjointed and commonplace by the frequent terrors of nightmare. But I could not believe that I had been asleep, for I remembered distinctly the gradual breaking-in of the vision upon me, like the new images in a dissolving view, or the growing distinctness of the landscape as the sun lifts up the veil of the morning mist. And while I was conscious of this incipient vision, I was also conscious that Pierre came to tell my father Mr. Filmore was waiting for him, and that my father hurried out of the room. No, it was not a dream; was it—the thought was full of tremulous exultation—was it the poet's nature in me, hitherto only a troubled yearning sensibility, now manifesting itself suddenly as spontaneous creation? Surely it was in this way that Homer saw the plain of Troy, that Dante saw the abodes of the departed, that Milton saw the earthward flight of the Tempter. Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organization—given a firmer tension to my nerves—carried off some dull obstruction? I had often read of such effects—in works of fiction at least. Nay; in genuine biographies I had read of the subtilizing or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers. Did not Novalis feel his inspiration intensified under the progress of consumption?

When my mind had dwelt for some time on this blissful idea, it seemed to me that I might perhaps test it by an exertion of my will. The vision had begun when my father was speaking of our going to Prague. I did not for a moment believe it was really a representation of that city; I believed—I hoped it was a picture that my newly liberated genius had painted in fiery haste, with the colours snatched from lazy memory. Suppose I were to fix my mind on some other place—Venice, for example, which was far more familiar to my imagination than Prague: perhaps the same sort of result would follow. I concentrated my thoughts on Venice; I stimulated my imagination with poetic memories, and strove to feel myself present in Venice, as I had felt myself present in Prague. But in vain. I was only colouring the Canaletto engravings that hung in my old bedroom at home; the picture was a shifting one, my mind wandering uncertainly in search of more vivid images; I could see no accident of form or shadow without conscious labour after the necessary conditions. It was all prosaic effort, not rapt passivity,

such as I had experienced half an hour before. I was discouraged; but I remembered that inspiration was fitful.

For several days I was in a state of excited expectation, watching for a recurrence of my new gift. I sent my thoughts ranging over my world of knowledge, in the hope that they would find some object which would send a reawakening vibration through my slumbering genius. But no; my world remained as dim as ever, and that flash of strange light refused to come again, though I watched for it with palpitating eagerness.

My father accompanied me every day in a drive, and a gradually lengthening walk as my powers of walking increased; and one evening he had agreed to come and fetch me at twelve the next day, that we might go together to select a musical box, and other purchases rigorously demanded of a rich Englishman visiting Geneva. He was one of the most punctual of men and bankers, and I was always nervously anxious to be quite ready for him at the appointed time. But, to my surprise, at a quarter past twelve he had not appeared. I felt all the impatience of a convalescent who has nothing particular to do, and who has just taken a tonic in the prospect of immediate exercise that would carry off the stimulus.

Unable to sit still and reserve my strength, I walked up and down the room, looking out on the current of the Rhone, just where it leaves the dark-blue lake; but thinking all the while of the possible causes that could detain my father.

Suddenly I was conscious that my father was in the room, but not alone: there were two persons with him. Strange! I had heard no footstep, I had not seen the door open; but I saw my father, and at his right hand our neighbour Mrs. Filmore, whom I remembered very well, though I had not seen her for five years. She was a commonplace middle-aged woman, in silk and cashmere; but the lady on the left of my father was not more than twenty, a tall, slim, willowy figure, with luxuriant blond hair, arranged in cunning braids and folds that looked almost too massive for the slight figure and the small-featured, thin-lipped face they crowned. But the face had not a girlish expression: the features were sharp, the pale grey eyes at once acute, restless, and sarcastic. They were fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity, and I felt a painful sensation as if a sharp wind were cutting me. The pale-green dress, and the green leaves that seemed to form a border about her pale blond hair, made me think of a Water-Nixie—for my mind was full of German lyrics, and this pale, fatal-eyed woman, with the green weeds, looked like a birth from some cold sedgy stream, the daughter of an aged river.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said . . .

But while the last word was in my ears, the whole group vanished, and there was nothing between me and the Chinese printed folding-screen that stood before the door. I was cold and trembling; I could only totter forward and throw myself on the sofa. This strange new power had manifested itself again . . . But was it a power? Might it not rather be a disease—a sort of intermittent delirium, concentrating my energy of brain into moments of unhealthy activity, and leaving my saner hours all the more barren? I felt a dizzy sense of unreality in what my eye rested on; I grasped the bell convulsively, like one trying to free himself from nightmare, and rang it twice. Pierre came with a look of alarm in his face.

"Monsieur ne se trouve pas bien?" he said anxiously.

"I'm tired of waiting, Pierre," I said, as distinctly and emphatically as I could, like a man determined to be sober in spite of wine; "I'm afraid something has happened to my father—he's usually so punctual. Run to the Hotel des Bergues and see if he is there."

Pierre left the room at once, with a soothing "Bien, Monsieur"; and I felt the better for this scene of simple, waking prose. Seeking to calm myself still further, I went into my bedroom, adjoining the salon, and opened a case of eau-de-Cologne; took out a bottle; went through the process of taking out the cork very neatly, and then rubbed the reviving spirit over my hands and forehead, and under my nostrils, drawing a new delight from the scent because I had procured it by slow details of labour, and by no strange sudden madness. Already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions.

Still enjoying the scent, I returned to the salon, but it was not unoccupied, as it had been before I left it. In front of the Chinese folding-screen there was my father, with Mrs. Filmore on his right hand, and on his left—the slim, blond-haired girl, with the keen face and the keen eyes fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said . . .

I heard no more, felt no more, till I became conscious that I was lying with my head low on the sofa, Pierre, and my father by my side. As soon as I was thoroughly revived, my father left the room, and presently returned, saying—

"I've been to tell the ladies how you are, Latimer. They were waiting in the next room. We shall put off our shopping expedition to-day."

Presently he said, "That young lady is Bertha Grant, Mrs. Filmore's orphan niece. Filmore has adopted her, and she lives with them, so you will have her for a neighbour when we go home—perhaps for a near relation; for there is a tenderness between her and Alfred, I suspect, and I should be gratified by the match, since Filmore means to provide for her in every way as if she were his daughter. It had not occurred to me that you knew nothing about her living with the Filmores."

He made no further allusion to the fact of my having fainted at the moment of seeing her, and I would not for the world have told him the reason: I shrank from the idea of disclosing to any one what might be regarded as a pitiable peculiarity, most of all from betraying it to my father, who would have suspected my sanity ever after.

I do not mean to dwell with particularity on the details of my experience. I have described these two cases at length, because they had definite, clearly traceable results in my after-lot.

Shortly after this last occurrence—I think the very next day—I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility, to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact: the vagrant, frivolous ideas and emotions of some uninteresting acquaintance—Mrs. Filmore, for example—would force themselves on my consciousness like an importunate, ill-played musical instrument, or the loud activity of an imprisoned insect. But this unpleasant sensibility was fitful, and left me moments of rest, when the souls of my companions were once more shut out from me, and I felt a relief such as silence brings to wearied nerves. I might have believed this importunate insight to be merely a diseased activity of the imagination, but that my prevision of incalculable words and actions proved it to have a fixed relation to the mental process in other minds. But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense

pain and grief when it seemed to be opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me—when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily-turned phrases, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent make-shift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets covering a fermenting heap.

At Basle we were joined by my brother Alfred, now a handsome, self-confident man of six-and-twenty—a thorough contrast to my fragile, nervous, ineffectual self. I believe I was held to have a sort of half-womanish, half-ghostly beauty; for the portrait-painters, who are thick as weeds at Geneva, had often asked me to sit to them, and I had been the model of a dying minstrel in a fancy picture. But I thoroughly disliked my own physique and nothing but the belief that it was a condition of poetic genius would have reconciled me to it. That brief hope was quite fled, and I saw in my face now nothing but the stamp of a morbid organization, framed for passive suffering—too feeble for the sublime resistance of poetic production. Alfred, from whom I had been almost constantly separated, and who, in his present stage of character and appearance, came before me as a perfect stranger, was bent on being extremely friendly and brother-like to me. He had the superficial kindness of a good-humoured, self-satisfied nature, that fears no rivalry, and has encountered no contrarities. I am not sure that my disposition was good enough for me to have been quite free from envy towards him, even if our desires had not clashed, and if I had been in the healthy human condition which admits of generous confidence and charitable construction. There must always have been an antipathy between our natures. As it was, he became in a few weeks an object of intense hatred to me; and when he entered the room, still more when he spoke, it was as if a sensation of grating metal had set my teeth on edge. My diseased consciousness was more intensely and continually occupied with his thoughts and emotions, than with those of any other person who came in my way. I was perpetually exasperated with the petty promptings of his conceit and his love of patronage, with his self-complacent belief in Bertha Grant's passion for him, with his half-pitying contempt for me—seen not in the ordinary indications of intonation and phrase and slight action, which an acute and suspicious mind is on the watch for, but in all their naked skinless complication.

For we were rivals, and our desires clashed, though he was not aware of it. I have said nothing yet of the effect Bertha Grant produced in me on a nearer acquaintance. That effect was chiefly determined by the fact that she made the only exception, among all the human beings about me, to my unhappy gift of insight. About Bertha I was always in a state of uncertainty: I could watch the expression of her face, and speculate on its meaning; I could ask for her opinion with the real interest of ignorance; I could listen for her words and watch for her smile with hope and fear: she had for me the fascination of an unravelled destiny. I say it was this fact that chiefly determined the strong effect she produced on me: for, in the abstract, no womanly character could seem to have less affinity for that of a shrinking, romantic, passionate youth than Bertha's. She was keen, sarcastic, unimaginative, prematurely cynical, remaining critical and unmoved in the most impressive scenes, inclined to dissect all my favourite poems, and especially contemptuous towards the German lyrics which were my pet literature at that time. To this moment I am unable to define my feeling towards her: it was not ordinary boyish admiration, for she was the very opposite, even to the colour of her hair, of the ideal woman who still remained to me the type of loveliness; and she was without that enthusiasm for the great and good, which, even at the moment of her strongest dominion over me, I should have declared to be the highest element of character. But there is no tyranny more complete than that which a self-centred negative nature exercises over a morbidly sensitive nature perpetually craving sympathy and support. The most independent people feel the effect of a man's silence in heightening their value for his opinion—feel an additional triumph in conquering the reverence of a critic habitually captious and satirical: no wonder,

then, that an enthusiastic self-distrusting youth should watch and wait before the closed secret of a sarcastic woman's face, as if it were the shrine of the doubtfully benignant deity who ruled his destiny. For a young enthusiast is unable to imagine the total negation in another mind of the emotions which are stirring his own: they may be feeble, latent, inactive, he thinks, but they are there—they may be called forth; sometimes, in moments of happy hallucination, he believes they may be there in all the greater strength because he sees no outward sign of them. And this effect, as I have intimated, was heightened to its utmost intensity in me, because Bertha was the only being who remained for me in the mysterious seclusion of soul that renders such youthful delusion possible. Doubtless there was another sort of fascination at work—that subtle physical attraction which delights in cheating our psychological predictions, and in compelling the men who paint sylphs, to fall in love with some *bonne et brave femme*, heavy-heeled and freckled.

Bertha's behaviour towards me was such as to encourage all my illusions, to heighten my boyish passion, and make me more and more dependent on her smiles. Looking back with my present wretched knowledge, I conclude that her vanity and love of power were intensely gratified by the belief that I had fainted on first seeing her purely from the strong impression her person had produced on me. The most prosaic woman likes to believe herself the object of a violent, a poetic passion; and without a grain of romance in her, Bertha had that spirit of intrigue which gave piquancy to the idea that the brother of the man she meant to marry was dying with love and jealousy for her sake. That she meant to marry my brother, was what at that time I did not believe; for though he was assiduous in his attentions to her, and I knew well enough that both he and my father had made up their minds to this result, there was not yet an understood engagement—there had been no explicit declaration; and Bertha habitually, while she flirted with my brother, and accepted his homage in a way that implied to him a thorough recognition of its intention, made me believe, by the subtlest looks and phrases—feminine nothings which could never be quoted against her—that he was really the object of her secret ridicule; that she thought him, as I did, a coxcomb, whom she would have pleasure in disappointing. Me she openly petted in my brother's presence, as if I were too young and sickly ever to be thought of as a lover; and that was the view he took of me. But I believe she must inwardly have delighted in the tremors into which she threw me by the coaxing way in which she patted my curls, while she laughed at my quotations. Such caresses were always given in the presence of our friends; for when we were alone together, she affected a much greater distance towards me, and now and then took the opportunity, by words or slight actions, to stimulate my foolish timid hope that she really preferred me. And why should she not follow her inclination? I was not in so advantageous a position as my brother, but I had fortune, I was not a year younger than she was, and she was an heiress, who would soon be of age to decide for herself.

The fluctuations of hope and fear, confined to this one channel, made each day in her presence a delicious torment. There was one deliberate act of hers which especially helped to intoxicate me. When we were at Vienna her twentieth birthday occurred, and as she was very fond of ornaments, we all took the opportunity of the splendid jewellers' shops in that Teutonic Paris to purchase her a birthday present of jewellery. Mine, naturally, was the least expensive; it was an opal ring—the opal was my favourite stone, because it seems to blush and turn pale as if it had a soul. I told Bertha so when I gave it her, and said that it was an emblem of the poetic nature, changing with the changing light of heaven and of woman's eyes. In the evening she appeared elegantly dressed, and wearing conspicuously all the birthday presents except mine. I looked eagerly at her fingers, but saw no opal. I had no opportunity of noticing this to her during the evening; but the next day, when I found her seated near the window alone, after breakfast, I said, "You scorn to wear my poor opal. I should have remembered that you despised poetic natures, and should have given you coral, or turquoise, or some other opaque unresponsive stone." "Do I despise it?" she answered, taking hold of a delicate gold chain which she

always wore round her neck and drawing out the end from her bosom with my ring hanging to it; "it hurts me a little, I can tell you," she said, with her usual dubious smile, "to wear it in that secret place; and since your poetical nature is so stupid as to prefer a more public position, I shall not endure the pain any longer."

She took off the ring from the chain and put it on her finger, smiling still, while the blood rushed to my cheeks, and I could not trust myself to say a word of entreaty that she would keep the ring where it was before.

I was completely fooled by this, and for two days shut myself up in my own room whenever Bertha was absent, that I might intoxicate myself afresh with the thought of this scene and all it implied.

I should mention that during these two months—which seemed a long life to me from the novelty and intensity of the pleasures and pains I underwent—my diseased anticipation in other people's consciousness continued to torment me; now it was my father, and now my brother, now Mrs. Filmore or her husband, and now our German courier, whose stream of thought rushed upon me like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of, though it allowed my own impulses and ideas to continue their uninterrupted course. It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness. The weariness and disgust of this involuntary intrusion into other souls was counteracted only by my ignorance of Bertha, and my growing passion for her; a passion enormously stimulated, if not produced, by that ignorance. She was my oasis of mystery in the dreary desert of knowledge. I had never allowed my diseased condition to betray itself, or to drive me into any unusual speech or action, except once, when, in a moment of peculiar bitterness against my brother, I had forestalled some words which I knew he was going to utter—a clever observation, which he had prepared beforehand. He had occasionally a slightly affected hesitation in his speech, and when he paused an instant after the second word, my impatience and jealousy impelled me to continue the speech for him, as if it were something we had both learned by rote. He coloured and looked astonished, as well as annoyed; and the words had no sooner escaped my lips than I felt a shock of alarm lest such an anticipation of words—very far from being words of course, easy to divine—should have betrayed me as an exceptional being, a sort of quiet energumen, whom every one, Bertha above all, would shudder at and avoid. But I magnified, as usual, the impression any word or deed of mine could produce on others; for no one gave any sign of having noticed my interruption as more than a rudeness, to be forgiven me on the score of my feeble nervous condition.

While this superadded consciousness of the actual was almost constant with me, I had never had a recurrence of that distinct prevision which I have described in relation to my first interview with Bertha; and I was waiting with eager curiosity to know whether or not my vision of Prague would prove to have been an instance of the same kind. A few days after the incident of the opal ring, we were paying one of our frequent visits to the Lichtenberg Palace. I could never look at many pictures in succession; for pictures, when they are at all powerful, affect me so strongly that one or two exhaust all my capability of contemplation. This morning I had been looking at Giorgione's picture of the cruel-eyed woman, said to be a likeness of Lucrezia Borgia. I had stood long alone before it, fascinated by the terrible reality of that cunning, relentless face, till I felt a strange poisoned sensation, as if I had long been inhaling a fatal odour, and was just beginning to be conscious of its effects. Perhaps even then I should not have moved away, if the rest of the party had not returned to this room, and announced that they were going to the Belvedere Gallery to settle a bet which had arisen between my brother and Mr. Filmore about a portrait. I followed them dreamily, and was hardly alive to what occurred till they had all gone up to the gallery, leaving me below; for I refused to come within sight of another picture that day. I made my way to the Grand Terrace, since it was agreed that we should

saunter in the gardens when the dispute had been decided. I had been sitting here a short space, vaguely conscious of trim gardens, with a city and green hills in the distance, when, wishing to avoid the proximity of the sentinel, I rose and walked down the broad stone steps, intending to seat myself farther on in the gardens. Just as I reached the gravel-walk, I felt an arm slipped within mine, and a light hand gently pressing my wrist. In the same instant a strange intoxicating numbness passed over me, like the continuance or climax of the sensation I was still feeling from the gaze of Lucrezia Borgia. The gardens, the summer sky, the consciousness of Bertha's arm being within mine, all vanished, and I seemed to be suddenly in darkness, out of which there gradually broke a dim firelight, and I felt myself sitting in my father's leather chair in the library at home. I knew the fireplace—the dogs for the wood-fire—the black marble chimney-piece with the white marble medallion of the dying Cleopatra in the centre. Intense and hopeless misery was pressing on my soul; the light became stronger, for Bertha was entering with a candle in her hand—Bertha, my wife—with cruel eyes, with green jewels and green leaves on her white ball-dress; every hateful thought within her present to me . . . "Madman, idiot! why don't you kill yourself, then?" It was a moment of hell. I saw into her pitiless soul—saw its barren worldliness, its scorching hate—and felt it clothe me round like an air I was obliged to breathe. She came with her candle and stood over me with a bitter smile of contempt; I saw the great emerald brooch on her bosom, a studded serpent with diamond eyes. I shuddered—I despised this woman with the barren soul and mean thoughts; but I felt helpless before her, as if she clutched my bleeding heart, and would clutch it till the last drop of life-blood ebbed away. She was my wife, and we hated each other. Gradually the hearth, the dim library, the candle-light disappeared—seemed to melt away into a background of light, the green serpent with the diamond eyes remaining a dark image on the retina. Then I had a sense of my eyelids quivering, and the living daylight broke in upon me; I saw gardens, and heard voices; I was seated on the steps of the Belvedere Terrace, and my friends were round me.

The tumult of mind into which I was thrown by this hideous vision made me ill for several days, and prolonged our stay at Vienna. I shuddered with horror as the scene recurred to me; and it recurred constantly, with all its minutiae, as if they had been burnt into my memory; and yet, such is the madness of the human heart under the influence of its immediate desires, I felt a wild hell-braving joy that Bertha was to be mine; for the fulfilment of my former prevision concerning her first appearance before me, left me little hope that this last hideous glimpse of the future was the mere diseased play of my own mind, and had no relation to external realities. One thing alone I looked towards as a possible means of casting doubt on my terrible conviction—the discovery that my vision of Prague had been false—and Prague was the next city on our route.

Meanwhile, I was no sooner in Bertha's society again than I was as completely under her sway as before. What if I saw into the heart of Bertha, the matured woman—Bertha, my wife? Bertha, the girl, was a fascinating secret to me still: I trembled under her touch; I felt the witchery of her presence; I yearned to be assured of her love. The fear of poison is feeble against the sense of thirst. Nay, I was just as jealous of my brother as before—just as much irritated by his small patronizing ways; for my pride, my diseased sensibility, were there as they had always been, and winced as inevitably under every offence as my eye winced from an intruding mote. The future, even when brought within the compass of feeling by a vision that made me shudder, had still no more than the force of an idea, compared with the force of present emotion—of my love for Bertha, of my dislike and jealousy towards my brother.

It is an old story, that men sell themselves to the tempter, and sign a bond with their blood, because it is only to take effect at a distant day; then rush on to snatch the cup their souls thirst after with an impulse not the less savage because there is a dark shadow beside them for evermore. There is no short cut, no patent tram-road, to wisdom: after all the centuries of invention, the soul's path lies through the thorny wilderness which must be still trodden in solitude, with bleeding feet, with sobs for help, as it was

trodden by them of old time.

My mind speculated eagerly on the means by which I should become my brother's successful rival, for I was still too timid, in my ignorance of Bertha's actual feeling, to venture on any step that would urge from her an avowal of it. I thought I should gain confidence even for this, if my vision of Prague proved to have been veracious; and yet, the horror of that certitude! Behind the slim girl Bertha, whose words and looks I watched for, whose touch was bliss, there stood continually that Bertha with the fuller form, the harder eyes, the more rigid mouth—with the barren, selfish soul laid bare; no longer a fascinating secret, but a measured fact, urging itself perpetually on my unwilling sight. Are you unable to give me your sympathy—you who react this? Are you unable to imagine this double consciousness at work within me, flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue? Yet you must have known something of the presentiments that spring from an insight at war with passion; and my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror. You have known the powerlessness of ideas before the might of impulse; and my visions, when once they had passed into memory, were mere ideas—pale shadows that beckoned in vain, while my hand was grasped by the living and the loved.

In after-days I thought with bitter regret that if I had foreseen something more or something different—if instead of that hideous vision which poisoned the passion it could not destroy, or if even along with it I could have had a foreshadowing of that moment when I looked on my brother's face for the last time, some softening influence would have been shed over my feeling towards him: pride and hatred would surely have been subdued into pity, and the record of those hidden sins would have been shortened. But this is one of the vain thoughts with which we men flatter ourselves. We try to believe that the egoism within us would have easily been melted, and that it was only the narrowness of our knowledge which hemmed in our generosity, our awe, our human piety, and hindered them from submerging our hard indifference to the sensations and emotions of our fellows. Our tenderness and self-renunciation seem strong when our egoism has had its day—when, after our mean striving for a triumph that is to be another's loss, the triumph comes suddenly, and we shudder at it, because it is held out by the chill hand of death.

Our arrival in Prague happened at night, and I was glad of this, for it seemed like a deferring of a terribly decisive moment, to be in the city for hours without seeing it. As we were not to remain long in Prague, but to go on speedily to Dresden, it was proposed that we should drive out the next morning and take a general view of the place, as well as visit some of its specially interesting spots, before the heat became oppressive—for we were in August, and the season was hot and dry. But it happened that the ladies were rather late at their morning toilet, and to my father's politely-repressed but perceptible annoyance, we were not in the carriage till the morning was far advanced. I thought with a sense of relief, as we entered the Jews' quarter, where we were to visit the old synagogue, that we should be kept in this flat, shut-up part of the city, until we should all be too tired and too warm to go farther, and so we should return without seeing more than the streets through which we had already passed. That would give me another day's suspense—suspense, the only form in which a fearful spirit knows the solace of hope. But, as I stood under the blackened, groined arches of that old synagogue, made dimly visible by the seven thin candles in the sacred lamp, while our Jewish cicerone reached down the Book of the Law, and read to us in its ancient tongue—I felt a shuddering impression that this strange building, with its shrunken lights, this surviving withered remnant of medieval Judaism, was of a piece with my vision. Those darkened dusty Christian saints, with their loftier arches and their larger candles, needed the consolatory scorn with which they might point to a more shrivelled death-in-life than their own.

As I expected, when we left the Jews' quarter the elders of our party wished to return to the hotel. But now, instead of rejoicing in this, as I had done beforehand, I felt a sudden overpowering impulse to go on at once to the bridge, and put an end to the suspense I had been wishing to protract. I declared, with unusual decision, that I would get out of the carriage and walk on alone; they might return without me. My father, thinking this merely a sample of my usual "poetic nonsense," objected that I should only do myself harm by walking in the heat; but when I persisted, he said angrily that I might follow my own absurd devices, but that Schmidt (our courier) must go with me. I assented to this, and set off with Schmidt towards the bridge. I had no sooner passed from under the archway of the grand old gate leading on to the bridge, than a trembling seized me, and I turned cold under the midday sun; yet I went on; I was in search of something—a small detail which I remembered with special intensity as part of my vision. There it was—the patch of rainbow light on the pavement transmitted through a lamp in the shape of a star.

The Lifted Veil by George Eliot

Chapter II

Before the autumn was at an end, and while the brown leaves still stood thick on the beeches in our park, my brother and Bertha were engaged to each other, and it was understood that their marriage was to take place early in the next spring. In spite of the certainty I had felt from that moment on the bridge at Prague, that Bertha would one day be my wife, my constitutional timidity and distrust had continued to benumb me, and the words in which I had sometimes premeditated a confession of my love, had died away unuttered. The same conflict had gone on within me as before—the longing for an assurance of love from Bertha's lips, the dread lest a word of contempt and denial should fall upon me like a corrosive acid. What was the conviction of a distant necessity to me? I trembled under a present glance, I hungered after a present joy, I was clogged and chilled by a present fear. And so the days passed on: I witnessed Bertha's engagement and heard her marriage discussed as if I were under a conscious nightmare—knowing it was a dream that would vanish, but feeling stifled under the grasp of hard-clutching fingers.

When I was not in Bertha's presence—and I was with her very often, for she continued to treat me with a playful patronage that wakened no jealousy in my brother—I spent my time chiefly in wandering, in strolling, or taking long rides while the daylight lasted, and then shutting myself up with my unread books; for books had lost the power of chaining my attention. My self-consciousness was heightened to that pitch of intensity in which our own emotions take the form of a drama which urges itself imperatively on our contemplation, and we begin to weep, less under the sense of our suffering than at the thought of it. I felt a sort of pitying anguish over the pathos of my own lot: the lot of a being finely organized for pain, but with hardly any fibres that responded to pleasure—to whom the idea of future evil robbed the present of its joy, and for whom the idea of future good did not still the uneasiness of a present yearning or a present dread. I went dumbly through that stage of the poet's suffering, in which he feels the delicious pang of utterance, and makes an image of his sorrows.

I was left entirely without remonstrance concerning this dreamy wayward life: I knew my father's thought about me: "That lad will never be good for anything in life: he may waste his years in an insignificant way on the income that falls to him: I shall not trouble myself about a career for him."

One mild morning in the beginning of November, it happened that I was standing outside the portico patting lazy old Caesar, a Newfoundland almost blind with age, the only dog that ever took any notice of me—for the very dogs shunned me, and fawned on the happier people about me—when the groom brought up my brother's horse which was to carry him to the hunt, and my brother himself appeared at

the door, florid, broad-chested, and self-complacent, feeling what a good-natured fellow he was not to behave insolently to us all on the strength of his great advantages.

"Latimer, old boy," he said to me in a tone of compassionate cordiality, "what a pity it is you don't have a run with the hounds now and then! The finest thing in the world for low spirits!"

"Low spirits!" I thought bitterly, as he rode away; "that is the sort of phrase with which coarse, narrow natures like yours think to describe experience of which you can know no more than your horse knows. It is to such as you that the good of this world falls: ready dulness, healthy selfishness, good-tempered conceit—these are the keys to happiness."

The quick thought came, that my selfishness was even stronger than his—it was only a suffering selfishness instead of an enjoying one. But then, again, my exasperating insight into Alfred's self-complacent soul, his freedom from all the doubts and fears, the unsatisfied yearnings, the exquisite tortures of sensitiveness, that had made the web of my life, seemed to absolve me from all bonds towards him. This man needed no pity, no love; those fine influences would have been as little felt by him as the delicate white mist is felt by the rock it caresses. There was no evil in store for him: if he was not to marry Bertha, it would be because he had found a lot pleasanter to himself.

Mr. Filmore's house lay not more than half a mile beyond our own gates, and whenever I knew my brother was gone in another direction, I went there for the chance of finding Bertha at home. Later on in the day I walked thither. By a rare accident she was alone, and we walked out in the grounds together, for she seldom went on foot beyond the trimly-swept gravel-walks. I remember what a beautiful sylph she looked to me as the low November sun shone on her blond hair, and she tripped along teasing me with her usual light banter, to which I listened half fondly, half moodily; it was all the sign Bertha's mysterious inner self ever made to me. To-day perhaps, the moodiness predominated, for I had not yet shaken off the access of jealous hate which my brother had raised in me by his parting patronage. Suddenly I interrupted and startled her by saying, almost fiercely, "Bertha, how can you love Alfred?"

She looked at me with surprise for a moment, but soon her light smile came again, and she answered sarcastically, "Why do you suppose I love him?"

"How can you ask that, Bertha?"

"What! your wisdom thinks I must love the man I'm going to marry? The most unpleasant thing in the world. I should quarrel with him; I should be jealous of him; our menage would be conducted in a very ill-bred manner. A little quiet contempt contributes greatly to the elegance of life."

"Bertha, that is not your real feeling. Why do you delight in trying to deceive me by inventing such cynical speeches?"

"I need never take the trouble of invention in order to deceive you, my small Tasso"—(that was the mocking name she usually gave me). "The easiest way to deceive a poet is to tell him the truth."

She was testing the validity of her epigram in a daring way, and for a moment the shadow of my vision—the Bertha whose soul was no secret to me—passed between me and the radiant girl, the playful sylph whose feelings were a fascinating mystery. I suppose I must have shuddered, or betrayed in some other way my momentary chill of horror.

"Tasso!" she said, seizing my wrist, and peeping round into my face, "are you really beginning to discern what a heartless girl I am? Why, you are not half the poet I thought you were; you are actually capable of believing the truth about me."

The shadow passed from between us, and was no longer the object nearest to me. The girl whose light fingers grasped me, whose elfish charming face looked into mine—who, I thought, was betraying an interest in my feelings that she would not have directly avowed,—this warm breathing presence again possessed my senses and imagination like a returning siren melody which had been overpowered for an instant by the roar of threatening waves. It was a moment as delicious to me as the waking up to a consciousness of youth after a dream of middle age. I forgot everything but my passion, and said with swimming eyes—

"Bertha, shall you love me when we are first married? I wouldn't mind if you really loved me only for a little while."

Her look of astonishment, as she loosed my hand and started away from me, recalled me to a sense of my strange, my criminal indiscretion.

"Forgive me," I said, hurriedly, as soon as I could speak again; "I did not know what I was saying."

"Ah, Tasso's mad fit has come on, I see," she answered quietly, for she had recovered herself sooner than I had. "Let him go home and keep his head cool. I must go in, for the sun is setting."

I left her—full of indignation against myself. I had let slip words which, if she reflected on them, might rouse in her a suspicion of my abnormal mental condition—a suspicion which of all things I dreaded. And besides that, I was ashamed of the apparent baseness I had committed in uttering them to my brother's betrothed wife. I wandered home slowly, entering our park through a private gate instead of by the lodges. As I approached the house, I saw a man dashing off at full speed from the stable-yard across the park. Had any accident happened at home? No; perhaps it was only one of my father's peremptory business errands that required this headlong haste.

Nevertheless I quickened my pace without any distinct motive, and was soon at the house. I will not dwell on the scene I found there. My brother was dead—had been pitched from his horse, and killed on the spot by a concussion of the brain.

I went up to the room where he lay, and where my father was seated beside him with a look of rigid despair. I had shunned my father more than any one since our return home, for the radical antipathy between our natures made my insight into his inner self a constant affliction to me. But now, as I went up to him, and stood beside him in sad silence, I felt the presence of a new element that blended us as we had never been blent before. My father had been one of the most successful men in the money-getting world: he had had no sentimental sufferings, no illness. The heaviest trouble that had befallen him was the death of his first wife. But he married my mother soon after; and I remember he seemed exactly the same, to my keen childish observation, the week after her death as before. But now, at last, a sorrow had come—the sorrow of old age, which suffers the more from the crushing of its pride and its hopes, in proportion as the pride and hope are narrow and prosaic. His son was to have been married soon—would probably have stood for the borough at the next election. That son's existence was the best motive that could be alleged for making new purchases of land every year to round off the estate. It is a dreary thing onto live on doing the same things year after year, without knowing why we do

them. Perhaps the tragedy of disappointed youth and passion is less piteous than the tragedy of disappointed age and worldliness.

As I saw into the desolation of my father's heart, I felt a movement of deep pity towards him, which was the beginning of a new affection—an affection that grew and strengthened in spite of the strange bitterness with which he regarded me in the first month or two after my brother's death. If it had not been for the softening influence of my compassion for him—the first deep compassion I had ever felt—I should have been stung by the perception that my father transferred the inheritance of an eldest son to me with a mortified sense that fate had compelled him to the unwelcome course of caring for me as an important being. It was only in spite of himself that he began to think of me with anxious regard. There is hardly any neglected child for whom death has made vacant a more favoured place, who will not understand what I mean.

Gradually, however, my new deference to his wishes, the effect of that patience which was born of my pity for him, won upon his affection, and he began to please himself with the endeavour to make me fill any brother's place as fully as my feebler personality would admit. I saw that the prospect which by and by presented itself of my becoming Bertha's husband was welcome to him, and he even contemplated in my case what he had not intended in my brother's—that his son and daughter-in-law should make one household with him. My softened feelings towards my father made this the happiest time I had known since childhood;—these last months in which I retained the delicious illusion of loving Bertha, of longing and doubting and hoping that she might love me. She behaved with a certain new consciousness and distance towards me after my brother's death; and I too was under a double constraint—that of delicacy towards my brother's memory and of anxiety as to the impression my abrupt words had left on her mind. But the additional screen this mutual reserve erected between us only brought me more completely under her power: no matter how empty the adytum, so that the veil be thick enough. So absolute is our soul's need of something hidden and uncertain for the maintenance of that doubt and hope and effort which are the breath of its life, that if the whole future were laid bare to us beyond to-day, the interest of all mankind would be bent on the hours that lie between; we should pant after the uncertainties of our one morning and our one afternoon; we should rush fiercely to the Exchange for our last possibility of speculation, of success, of disappointment: we should have a glut of political prophets foretelling a crisis or a no-crisis within the only twenty-four hours left open to prophecy. Conceive the condition of the human mind if all propositions whatsoever were self-evident except one, which was to become self-evident at the close of a summer's day, but in the meantime might be the subject of question, of hypothesis, of debate. Art and philosophy, literature and science, would fasten like bees on that one proposition which had the honey of probability in it, and be the more eager because their enjoyment would end with sunset. Our impulses, our spiritual activities, no more adjust themselves to the idea of their future nullity, than the beating of our heart, or the irritability of our muscles.

Bertha, the slim, fair-haired girl, whose present thoughts and emotions were an enigma to me amidst the fatiguing obviousness of the other minds around me, was as absorbing to me as a single unknown to-day—as a single hypothetic proposition to remain problematic till sunset; and all the cramped, hemmed-in belief and disbelief, trust and distrust, of my nature, welled out in this one narrow channel.

And she made me believe that she loved me. Without ever quitting her tone of badinage and playful superiority, she intoxicated me with the sense that I was necessary to her, that she was never at ease, unless I was near her, submitting to her playful tyranny. It costs a woman so little effort to beset us in this way! A half-repressed word, a moment's unexpected silence, even an easy fit of petulance on our account, will serve us as hashish for a long while. Out of the subtlest web of scarcely perceptible signs,

she set me weaving the fancy that she had always unconsciously loved me better than Alfred, but that, with the ignorant fluttered sensibility of a young girl, she had been imposed on by the charm that lay for her in the distinction of being admired and chosen by a man who made so brilliant a figure in the world as my brother. She satirized herself in a very graceful way for her vanity and ambition. What was it to me that I had the light of my wretched provision on the fact that now it was I who possessed at least all but the personal part of my brother's advantages? Our sweet illusions are half of them conscious illusions, like effects of colour that we know to be made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags.

We were married eighteen months after Alfred's death, one cold, clear morning in April, when there came hail and sunshine both together; and Bertha, in her white silk and pale-green leaves, and the pale hues of her hair and face, looked like the spirit of the morning. My father was happier than he had thought of being again: my marriage, he felt sure, would complete the desirable modification of my character, and make me practical and worldly enough to take my place in society among sane men. For he delighted in Bertha's tact and acuteness, and felt sure she would be mistress of me, and make me what she chose: I was only twenty-one, and madly in love with her. Poor father! He kept that hope a little while after our first year of marriage, and it was not quite extinct when paralysis came and saved him from utter disappointment.

I shall hurry through the rest of my story, not dwelling so much as I have hitherto done on my inward experience. When people are well known to each other, they talk rather of what befalls them externally, leaving their feelings and sentiments to be inferred.

We lived in a round of visits for some time after our return home, giving splendid dinner-parties, and making a sensation in our neighbourhood by the new lustre of our equipage, for my father had reserved this display of his increased wealth for the period of his son's marriage; and we gave our acquaintances liberal opportunity for remarking that it was a pity I made so poor a figure as an heir and a bridegroom. The nervous fatigue of this existence, the insincerities and platitudes which I had to live through twice over—through my inner and outward sense—would have been maddening to me, if I had not had that sort of intoxicated callousness which came from the delights of a first passion. A bride and bridegroom, surrounded by all the appliances of wealth, hurried through the day by the whirl of society, filling their solitary moments with hastily-snatched caresses, are prepared for their future life together as the novice is prepared for the cloister—by experiencing its utmost contrast.

Through all these crowded excited months, Bertha's inward self remained shrouded from me, and I still read her thoughts only through the language of her lips and demeanour: I had still the human interest of wondering whether what I did and said pleased her, of longing to hear a word of affection, of giving a delicious exaggeration of meaning to her smile. But I was conscious of a growing difference in her manner towards me; sometimes strong enough to be called haughty coldness, cutting and chilling me as the hail had done that came across the sunshine on our marriage morning; sometimes only perceptible in the dexterous avoidance of a *tete-a-tete* walk or dinner to which I had been looking forward. I had been deeply pained by this—had even felt a sort of crushing of the heart, from the sense that my brief day of happiness was near its setting; but still I remained dependent on Bertha, eager for the last rays of a bliss that would soon be gone for ever, hoping and watching for some after-glow more beautiful from the impending night.

I remember—how should I not remember?—the time when that dependence and hope utterly left me, when the sadness I had felt in Bertha's growing estrangement became a joy that I looked back upon with longing as a man might look back on the last pains in a paralysed limb. It was just after the close of my father's last illness, which had necessarily withdrawn us from society and thrown us more on

each other. It was the evening of father's death. On that evening the veil which had shrouded Bertha's soul from me—had made me find in her alone among my fellow-beings the blessed possibility of mystery, and doubt, and expectation—was first withdrawn. Perhaps it was the first day since the beginning of my passion for her, in which that passion was completely neutralized by the presence of an absorbing feeling of another kind. I had been watching by my father's deathbed: I had been witnessing the last fitful yearning glance his soul had cast back on the spent inheritance of life—the last faint consciousness of love he had gathered from the pressure of my hand. What are all our personal loves when we have been sharing in that supreme agony? In the first moments when we come away from the presence of death, every other relation to the living is merged, to our feeling, in the great relation of a common nature and a common destiny.

In that state of mind I joined Bertha in her private sitting-room. She was seated in a leaning posture on a settee, with her back towards the door; the great rich coils of her pale blond hair surmounting her small neck, visible above the back of the settee. I remember, as I closed the door behind me, a cold tremulousness seizing me, and a vague sense of being hated and lonely—vague and strong, like a presentiment. I know how I looked at that moment, for I saw myself in Bertha's thought as she lifted her cutting grey eyes, and looked at me: a miserable ghost-seer, surrounded by phantoms in the noonday, trembling under a breeze when the leaves were still, without appetite for the common objects of human desires, but pining after the moon-beams. We were front to front with each other, and judged each other. The terrible moment of complete illumination had come to me, and I saw that the darkness had hidden no landscape from me, but only a blank prosaic wall: from that evening forth, through the sickening years which followed, I saw all round the narrow room of this woman's soul—saw petty artifice and mere negation where I had delighted to believe in coy sensibilities and in wit at war with latent feeling—saw the light floating vanities of the girl defining themselves into the systematic coquetry, the scheming selfishness, of the woman—saw repulsion and antipathy harden into cruel hatred, giving pain only for the sake of wreaking itself.

For Bertha too, after her kind, felt the bitterness of disillusion. She had believed that my wild poet's passion for her would make me her slave; and that, being her slave, I should execute her will in all things. With the essential shallowness of a negative, unimaginative nature, she was unable to conceive the fact that sensibilities were anything else than weaknesses. She had thought my weaknesses would put me in her power, and she found them unmanageable forces. Our positions were reversed. Before marriage she had completely mastered my imagination, for she was a secret to me; and I created the unknown thought before which I trembled as if it were hers. But now that her soul was laid open to me, now that I was compelled to share the privacy of her motives, to follow all the petty devices that preceded her words and acts, she found herself powerless with me, except to produce in me the chill shudder of repulsion—powerless, because I could be acted on by no lever within her reach. I was dead to worldly ambitions, to social vanities, to all the incentives within the compass of her narrow imagination, and I lived under influences utterly invisible to her.

She was really pitiable to have such a husband, and so all the world thought. A graceful, brilliant woman, like Bertha, who smiled on morning callers, made a figure in ball-rooms, and was capable of that light repartee which, from such a woman, is accepted as wit, was secure of carrying off all sympathy from a husband who was sickly, abstracted, and, as some suspected, crack-brained. Even the servants in our house gave her the balance of their regard and pity. For there were no audible quarrels between us; our alienation, our repulsion from each other, lay within the silence of our own hearts; and if the mistress went out a great deal, and seemed to dislike the master's society, was it not natural, poor thing? The master was odd. I was kind and just to my dependants, but I excited in them a shrinking, half-contemptuous pity; for this class of men and women are but slightly determined in their estimate

of others by general considerations, or even experience, of character. They judge of persons as they judge of coins, and value those who pass current at a high rate.

After a time I interfered so little with Bertha's habits that it might seem wonderful how her hatred towards me could grow so intense and active as it did. But she had begun to suspect, by some involuntary betrayal of mine, that there was an abnormal power of penetration in me—that fitfully, at least, I was strangely cognizant of her thoughts and intentions, and she began to be haunted by a terror of me, which alternated every now and then with defiance. She meditated continually how the incubus could be shaken off her life—how she could be freed from this hateful bond to a being whom she at once despised as an imbecile, and dreaded as an inquisitor. For a long while she lived in the hope that my evident wretchedness would drive me to the commission of suicide; but suicide was not in my nature. I was too completely swayed by the sense that I was in the grasp of unknown forces, to believe in my power of self-release. Towards my own destiny I had become entirely passive; for my one ardent desire had spent itself, and impulse no longer predominated over knowledge. For this reason I never thought of taking any steps towards a complete separation, which would have made our alienation evident to the world. Why should I rush for help to a new course, when I was only suffering from the consequences of a deed which had been the act of my intensest will? That would have been the logic of one who had desires to gratify, and I had no desires. But Bertha and I lived more and more aloof from each other. The rich find it easy to live married and apart.

That course of our life which I have indicated in a few sentences filled the space of years. So much misery—so slow and hideous a growth of hatred and sin, may be compressed into a sentence! And men judge of each other's lives through this summary medium. They epitomize the experience of their fellow-mortal, and pronounce judgment on him in neat syntax, and feel themselves wise and virtuous—conquerors over the temptations they define in well-selected predicates. Seven years of wretchedness glide glibly over the lips of the man who has never counted them out in moments of chill disappointment, of head and heart throbbings, of dread and vain wrestling, of remorse and despair. We learn words by rote, but not their meaning; that must be paid for with our life-blood, and printed in the subtle fibres of our nerves.

But I will hasten to finish my story. Brevity is justified at once to those who readily understand, and to those who will never understand.

Some years after my father's death, I was sitting by the dim firelight in my library one January evening—sitting in the leather chair that used to be my father's—when Bertha appeared at the door, with a candle in her hand, and advanced towards me. I knew the ball-dress she had on—the white ball-dress, with the green jewels, shone upon by the light of the wax candle which lit up the medallion of the dying Cleopatra on the mantelpiece. Why did she come to me before going out? I had not seen her in the library, which was my habitual place for months. Why did she stand before me with the candle in her hand, with her cruel contemptuous eyes fixed on me, and the glittering serpent, like a familiar demon, on her breast? For a moment I thought this fulfilment of my vision at Vienna marked some dreadful crisis in my fate, but I saw nothing in Bertha's mind, as she stood before me, except scorn for the look of overwhelming misery with which I sat before her . . . "Fool, idiot, why don't you kill yourself, then?"—that was her thought. But at length her thoughts reverted to her errand, and she spoke aloud. The apparently indifferent nature of the errand seemed to make a ridiculous anticlimax to my prevision and my agitation.

"I have had to hire a new maid. Fletcher is going to be married, and she wants me to ask you to let her husband have the public-house and farm at Molton. I wish him to have it. You must give the promise

now, because Fletcher is going to-morrow morning—and quickly, because I'm in a hurry."

"Very well; you may promise her," I said, indifferently, and Bertha swept out of the library again.

I always shrank from the sight of a new person, and all the more when it was a person whose mental life was likely to weary my reluctant insight with worldly ignorant trivialities. But I shrank especially from the sight of this new maid, because her advent had been announced to me at a moment to which I could not cease to attach some fatality: I had a vague dread that I should find her mixed up with the dreary drama of my life—that some new sickening vision would reveal her to me as an evil genius. When at last I did unavoidably meet her, the vague dread was changed into definite disgust. She was a tall, wiry, dark-eyed woman, this Mrs. Archer, with a face handsome enough to give her coarse hard nature the odious finish of bold, self-confident coquetry. That was enough to make me avoid her, quite apart from the contemptuous feeling with which she contemplated me. I seldom saw her; but I perceived that she rapidly became a favourite with her mistress, and, after the lapse of eight or nine months, I began to be aware that there had arisen in Bertha's mind towards this woman a mingled feeling of fear and dependence, and that this feeling was associated with ill-defined images of candle-light scenes in her dressing-room, and the locking-up of something in Bertha's cabinet. My interviews with my wife had become so brief and so rarely solitary, that I had no opportunity of perceiving these images in her mind with more definiteness. The recollections of the past become contracted in the rapidity of thought till they sometimes bear hardly a more distinct resemblance to the external reality than the forms of an oriental alphabet to the objects that suggested them.

Besides, for the last year or more a modification had been going forward in my mental condition, and was growing more and more marked. My insight into the minds of those around me was becoming dimmer and more fitful, and the ideas that crowded my double consciousness became less and less dependent on any personal contact. All that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect me. But along with this relief from wearisome insight, there was a new development of what I concluded—as I have since found rightly—to be a provision of external scenes. It was as if the relation between me and my fellow-men was more and more deadened, and my relation to what we call the inanimate was quickened into new life. The more I lived apart from society, and in proportion as my wretchedness subsided from the violent throb of agonized passion into the dulness of habitual pain, the more frequent and vivid became such visions as that I had had of Prague—of strange cities, of sandy plains, of gigantic ruins, of midnight skies with strange bright constellations, of mountain-passes, of grassy nooks flecked with the afternoon sunshine through the boughs: I was in the midst of such scenes, and in all of them one presence seemed to weigh on me in all these mighty shapes—the presence of something unknown and pitiless. For continual suffering had annihilated religious faith within me: to the utterly miserable—the unloving and the unloved—there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils. And beyond all these, and continually recurring, was the vision of my death—the pangs, the suffocation, the last struggle, when life would be grasped at in vain.

Things were in this state near the end of the seventh year. I had become entirely free from insight, from my abnormal cognizance of any other consciousness than my own, and instead of intruding involuntarily into the world of other minds, was living continually in my own solitary future. Bertha was aware that I was greatly changed. To my surprise she had of late seemed to seek opportunities of remaining in my society, and had cultivated that kind of distant yet familiar talk which is customary between a husband and wife who live in polite and irrevocable alienation. I bore this with languid submission, and without feeling enough interest in her motives to be roused into keen observation; yet I could not help perceiving something triumphant and excited in her carriage and the expression of her

face—something too subtle to express itself in words or tones, but giving one the idea that she lived in a state of expectation or hopeful suspense. My chief feeling was satisfaction that her inner self was once more shut out from me; and I almost revelled for the moment in the absent melancholy that made me answer her at cross purposes, and betray utter ignorance of what she had been saying. I remember well the look and the smile with which she one day said, after a mistake of this kind on my part: "I used to think you were a clairvoyant, and that was the reason why you were so bitter against other clairvoyants, wanting to keep your monopoly; but I see now you have become rather duller than the rest of the world."

I said nothing in reply. It occurred to me that her recent obtrusion of herself upon me might have been prompted by the wish to test my power of detecting some of her secrets; but I let the thought drop again at once: her motives and her deeds had no interest for me, and whatever pleasures she might be seeking, I had no wish to baulk her. There was still pity in my soul for every living thing, and Bertha was living—was surrounded with possibilities of misery.

Just at this time there occurred an event which roused me somewhat from my inertia, and gave me an interest in the passing moment that I had thought impossible for me. It was a visit from Charles Meunier, who had written me word that he was coming to England for relaxation from too strenuous labour, and would like too see me. Meunier had now a European reputation; but his letter to me expressed that keen remembrance of an early regard, an early debt of sympathy, which is inseparable from nobility of character: and I too felt as if his presence would be to me like a transient resurrection into a happier pre-existence.

He came, and as far as possible, I renewed our old pleasure of making *tete-a-tete* excursions, though, instead of mountains and glaciers and the wide blue lake, we had to content ourselves with mere slopes and ponds and artificial plantations. The years had changed us both, but with what different result! Meunier was now a brilliant figure in society, to whom elegant women pretended to listen, and whose acquaintance was boasted of by noblemen ambitious of brains. He repressed with the utmost delicacy all betrayal of the shock which I am sure he must have received from our meeting, or of a desire to penetrate into my condition and circumstances, and sought by the utmost exertion of his charming social powers to make our reunion agreeable. Bertha was much struck by the unexpected fascinations of a visitor whom she had expected to find presentable only on the score of his celebrity, and put forth all her coquetties and accomplishments. Apparently she succeeded in attracting his admiration, for his manner towards her was attentive and flattering. The effect of his presence on me was so benignant, especially in those renewals of our old *tete-a-tete* wanderings, when he poured forth to me wonderful narratives of his professional experience, that more than once, when his talk turned on the psychological relations of disease, the thought crossed my mind that, if his stay with me were long enough, I might possibly bring myself to tell this man the secrets of my lot. Might there not lie some remedy for me, too, in his science? Might there not at least lie some comprehension and sympathy ready for me in his large and susceptible mind? But the thought only flickered feebly now and then, and died out before it could become a wish. The horror I had of again breaking in on the privacy of another soul, made me, by an irrational instinct, draw the shroud of concealment more closely around my own, as we automatically perform the gesture we feel to be wanting in another.

When Meunier's visit was approaching its conclusion, there happened an event which caused some excitement in our household, owing to the surprisingly strong effect it appeared to produce on Bertha—on Bertha, the self-possessed, who usually seemed inaccessible to feminine agitations, and did even her hate in a self-restrained hygienic manner. This event was the sudden severe illness of her maid, Mrs. Archer. I have reserved to this moment the mention of a circumstance which had forced itself on my

notice shortly before Meunier's arrival, namely, that there had been some quarrel between Bertha and this maid, apparently during a visit to a distant family, in which she had accompanied her mistress. I had overheard Archer speaking in a tone of bitter insolence, which I should have thought an adequate reason for immediate dismissal. No dismissal followed; on the contrary, Bertha seemed to be silently putting up with personal inconveniences from the exhibitions of this woman's temper. I was the more astonished to observe that her illness seemed a cause of strong solicitude to Bertha; that she was at the bedside night and day, and would allow no one else to officiate as head-nurse. It happened that our family doctor was out on a holiday, an accident which made Meunier's presence in the house doubly welcome, and he apparently entered into the case with an interest which seemed so much stronger than the ordinary professional feeling, that one day when he had fallen into a long fit of silence after visiting her, I said to him—

"Is this a very peculiar case of disease, Meunier?"

"No," he answered, "it is an attack of peritonitis, which will be fatal, but which does not differ physically from many other cases that have come under my observation. But I'll tell you what I have on my mind. I want to make an experiment on this woman, if you will give me permission. It can do her no harm—will give her no pain—for I shall not make it until life is extinct to all purposes of sensation. I want to try the effect of transfusing blood into her arteries after the heart has ceased to beat for some minutes. I have tried the experiment again and again with animals that have died of this disease, with astounding results, and I want to try it on a human subject. I have the small tubes necessary, in a case I have with me, and the rest of the apparatus could be prepared readily. I should use my own blood—take it from my own arm. This woman won't live through the night, I'm convinced, and I want you to promise me your assistance in making the experiment. I can't do without another hand, but it would perhaps not be well to call in a medical assistant from among your provincial doctors. A disagreeable foolish version of the thing might get abroad."

"Have you spoken to my wife on the subject?" I said, "because she appears to be peculiarly sensitive about this woman: she has been a favourite maid."

"To tell you the truth," said Meunier, "I don't want her to know about it. There are always insuperable difficulties with women in these matters, and the effect on the supposed dead body may be startling. You and I will sit up together, and be in readiness. When certain symptoms appear I shall take you in, and at the right moment we must manage to get every one else out of the room."

I need not give our farther conversation on the subject. He entered very fully into the details, and overcame my repulsion from them, by exciting in me a mingled awe and curiosity concerning the possible results of his experiment.

We prepared everything, and he instructed me in my part as assistant. He had not told Bertha of his absolute conviction that Archer would not survive through the night, and endeavoured to persuade her to leave the patient and take a night's rest. But she was obstinate, suspecting the fact that death was at hand, and supposing that he wished merely to save her nerves. She refused to leave the sick-room. Meunier and I sat up together in the library, he making frequent visits to the sick-room, and returning with the information that the case was taking precisely the course he expected. Once he said to me, "Can you imagine any cause of ill-feeling this woman has against her mistress, who is so devoted to her?"

"I think there was some misunderstanding between them before her illness. Why do you ask?"

"Because I have observed for the last five or six hours—since, I fancy, she has lost all hope of recovery—there seems a strange prompting in her to say something which pain and failing strength forbid her to utter; and there is a look of hideous meaning in her eyes, which she turns continually towards her mistress. In this disease the mind often remains singularly clear to the last."

"I am not surprised at an indication of malevolent feeling in her," I said. "She is a woman who has always inspired me with distrust and dislike, but she managed to insinuate herself into her mistress's favour." He was silent after this, looking at the fire with an air of absorption, till he went upstairs again. He stayed away longer than usual, and on returning, said to me quietly, "Come now."

I followed him to the chamber where death was hovering. The dark hangings of the large bed made a background that gave a strong relief to Bertha's pale face as I entered. She started forward as she saw me enter, and then looked at Meunier with an expression of angry inquiry; but he lifted up his hand as it to impose silence, while he fixed his glance on the dying woman and felt her pulse. The face was pinched and ghastly, a cold perspiration was on the forehead, and the eyelids were lowered so as to conceal the large dark eyes. After a minute or two, Meunier walked round to the other side of the bed where Bertha stood, and with his usual air of gentle politeness towards her begged her to leave the patient under our care—everything should be done for her—she was no longer in a state to be conscious of an affectionate presence. Bertha was hesitating, apparently almost willing to believe his assurance and to comply. She looked round at the ghastly dying face, as if to read the confirmation of that assurance, when for a moment the lowered eyelids were raised again, and it seemed as if the eyes were looking towards Bertha, but blankly. A shudder passed through Bertha's frame, and she returned to her station near the pillow, tacitly implying that she would not leave the room.

The eyelids were lifted no more. Once I looked at Bertha as she watched the face of the dying one. She wore a rich peignoir, and her blond hair was half covered by a lace cap: in her attire she was, as always, an elegant woman, fit to figure in a picture of modern aristocratic life: but I asked myself how that face of hers could ever have seemed to me the face of a woman born of woman, with memories of childhood, capable of pain, needing to be fondled? The features at that moment seemed so preternaturally sharp, the eyes were so hard and eager—she looked like a cruel immortal, finding her spiritual feast in the agonies of a dying race. For across those hard features there came something like a flash when the last hour had been breathed out, and we all felt that the dark veil had completely fallen. What secret was there between Bertha and this woman? I turned my eyes from her with a horrible dread lest my insight should return, and I should be obliged to see what had been breeding about two unloving women's hearts. I felt that Bertha had been watching for the moment of death as the sealing of her secret: I thanked Heaven it could remain sealed for me.

Meunier said quietly, "She is gone." He then gave his arm to Bertha, and she submitted to be led out of the room.

I suppose it was at her order that two female attendants came into the room, and dismissed the younger one who had been present before. When they entered, Meunier had already opened the artery in the long thin neck that lay rigid on the pillow, and I dismissed them, ordering them to remain at a distance till we rang: the doctor, I said, had an operation to perform—he was not sure about the death. For the next twenty minutes I forgot everything but Meunier and the experiment in which he was so absorbed, that I think his senses would have been closed against all sounds or sights which had no relation to it. It was my task at first to keep up the artificial respiration in the body after the transfusion had been effected, but presently Meunier relieved me, and I could see the wondrous slow return of life; the breast

began to heave, the inspirations became stronger, the eyelids quivered, and the soul seemed to have returned beneath them. The artificial respiration was withdrawn: still the breathing continued, and there was a movement of the lips.

Just then I heard the handle of the door moving: I suppose Bertha had heard from the women that they had been dismissed: probably a vague fear had arisen in her mind, for she entered with a look of alarm. She came to the foot of the bed and gave a stifled cry.

The dead woman's eyes were wide open, and met hers in full recognition— the recognition of hate. With a sudden strong effort, the hand that Bertha had thought for ever still was pointed towards her, and the haggard face moved. The gasping eager voice said—

"You mean to poison your husband . . . the poison is in the black cabinet . . . I got it for you . . . you laughed at me, and told lies about me behind my back, to make me disgusting . . . because you were jealous . . . are you sorry . . . now?"

The lips continued to murmur, but the sounds were no longer distinct. Soon there was no sound—only a slight movement: the flame had leaped out, and was being extinguished the faster. The wretched woman's heart- strings had been set to hatred and vengeance; the spirit of life had swept the chords for an instant, and was gone again for ever. Great God! Is this what it is to live again . . . to wake up with our unstilled thirst upon us, with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins?

Bertha stood pale at the foot of the bed, quivering and helpless, despairing of devices, like a cunning animal whose hiding-places are surrounded by swift-advancing flame. Even Meunier looked paralysed; life for that moment ceased to be a scientific problem to him. As for me, this scene seemed of one texture with the rest of my existence: horror was my familiar, and this new revelation was only like an old pain recurring with new circumstances.

Since then Bertha and I have lived apart—she in her own neighbourhood, the mistress of half our wealth, I as a wanderer in foreign countries, until I came to this Devonshire nest to die. Bertha lives pitied and admired; for what had I against that charming woman, whom every one but myself could have been happy with? There had been no witness of the scene in the dying room except Meunier, and while Meunier lived his lips were sealed by a promise to me.

Once or twice, weary of wandering, I rested in a favourite spot, and my heart went out towards the men and women and children whose faces were becoming familiar to me; but I was driven away again in terror at the approach of my old insight—driven away to live continually with the one Unknown Presence revealed and yet hidden by the moving curtain of the earth and sky. Till at last disease took hold of me and forced me to rest here—forced me to live in dependence on my servants. And then the curse of insight—of my double consciousness, came again, and has never left me. I know all their narrow thoughts, their feeble regard, their half-wearied pity.

It is the 20th of September, 1850. I know these figures I have just written, as if they were a long familiar inscription. I have seen them on this page in my desk unnumbered times, when the scene of my dying struggle has opened upon me . . .

Solitude of Self (1892)

by Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Address delivered by Elizabeth Cady Stanton before the Committee of the Judiciary of the United States Congress, Monday, January 18, 1892

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee: We have been speaking before Committees of the Judiciary for the last twenty years, and we have gone over all the arguments in favor of a sixteenth amendment which are familiar to all you gentlemen; therefore, it will not be necessary that I should repeat them again.

The point I wish plainly to bring before you on this occasion is the individuality of each human soul; our Protestant idea, the right of individual conscience and judgment-our republican idea, individual citizenship. In discussing the rights of woman, we are to consider, first, what belongs to her as an individual, in a world of her own, the arbiter of her own destiny, an imaginary Robinson Crusoe with her woman Friday on a solitary island. Her rights under such circumstances are to use all her faculties for her own safety and happiness.

Secondly, if we consider her as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our Government.

Thirdly, viewed as a woman, an equal factor in civilization, her rights and duties are still the same-individual happiness and development.

Fourthly, it is only the incidental relations of life, such as mother, wife, sister, daughter, that may involve some special duties and training. In the usual discussion in regard to woman's sphere, such as men as Herbert Spencer, Frederic Harrison, and Grant Allen uniformly subordinate her rights and duties as an individual, as a citizen, as a woman, to the necessities of these incidental relations, some of which a large class of woman may never assume. In discussing the sphere of man we do not decide his rights as an individual, as a citizen, as a man by his duties as a father, a husband, a brother, or a son, relations some of which he may never fill. Moreover he would be better fitted for these very relations and whatever special work he might choose to do to earn his bread by the complete development of all his faculties as an individual.

Just so with woman. The education that will fit her to discharge the duties in the largest sphere of human usefulness will best fit her for whatever special work she may be compelled to do.

The isolation of every human soul and the necessity of self-dependence must give each individual the right, to choose his own surroundings.

The strongest reason for giving woman all the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of her faculties, forces of mind and body; for giving her the most enlarged freedom of thought and action; a complete emancipation from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition; from all the crippling influences of fear, is the solitude and personal responsibility of her

own individual life. The strongest reason why we ask for woman a voice in the government under which she lives; in the religion she is asked to believe; equality in social life, where she is the chief factor; a place in the trades and professions, where she may earn her bread, is because of her birthright to self-sovereignty; because, as an individual, she must rely on herself. No matter how much women prefer to lean, to be protected and supported, nor how much men desire to have them do so, they must make the voyage of life alone, and for safety in an emergency they must know something of the laws of navigation. To guide our own craft, we must be captain, pilot, engineer; with chart and compass to stand at the wheel; to match the wind and waves and know when to take in the sail, and to read the signs in the firmament over all. It matters not whether the solitary voyager is man or woman.

Nature having endowed them equally, leaves them to their own skill and judgment in the hour of danger, and, if not equal to the occasion, alike they perish.

To appreciate the importance of fitting every human soul for independent action, think for a moment of the immeasurable solitude of self. We come into the world alone, unlike all who have gone before us; we leave it alone under circumstances peculiar to ourselves. No mortal ever has been, no mortal over will be like the soul just launched on the sea of life. There can never again be just such environments as make up the infancy, youth and manhood of this one. Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another. No one has ever found two blades of ribbon grass alike, and no one will never find two human beings alike. Seeing, then, what must be the infinite diversity in human, character, we can in a measure appreciate the loss to a nation when any large class of the people is uneducated and unrepresented in the government. We ask for the complete development of every individual, first, for his own benefit and happiness. In fitting out an army we give each soldier his own knapsack, arms, powder, his blanket, cup, knife, fork and spoon. We provide alike for all their individual necessities, then each man bears his own burden.

Again we ask complete individual development for the general good; for the consensus of the competent on the whole round of human interest; on all questions of national life, and here each man must bear his share of the general burden. It is sad to see how soon friendless children are left to bear their own burdens before they can analyse their feelings; before they can even tell their joys and sorrows, they are thrown on their own resources. The great lesson that nature seems to teach us at all ages is self-dependence, self-protection, self-support. What a touching instance of a child's solitude; of that hunger of heart for love and recognition, in the case of the little girl who helped to dress a christmas tree for the children of the family in which she served. On finding there was no present for herself she slipped away in the darkness and spent the night in an open field sitting on a stone, and when found in the morning was weeping as if her heart would break. No mortal will ever know the thoughts that passed through the mind of that friendless child in the long hours of that cold night, with only the silent stars to keep her company. The mention of her case in the daily papers moved many generous hearts to send her presents, but in the hours of her keenest sufferings she was thrown wholly on herself for consolation.

In youth our most bitter disappointments, our brightest hopes and ambitions are known only to otherwise, even our friendship and love we never fully share with another; there is something of every passion in every situation we conceal. Even so in our triumphs and our defeats.

The successful candidate for Presidency and his opponent each have a solitude peculiarly his own, and good form forbids either in speak of his pleasure or regret. The solitude of the king on his throne and the prisoner in his cell differs in character and degree, but it is solitude nevertheless.

We ask no sympathy from others in the anxiety and agony of a broken friendship or shattered love. When death sunders our nearest ties, alone we sit in the shadows of our affliction. Alike mid the greatest triumphs and darkest tragedies of life we walk alone. On the devine heights of human attainments, eulogized and worshiped as a hero or saint, we stand alone. In ignorance, poverty, and vice, as a pauper or criminal, alone we starve or steal; alone we suffer the sneers and rebuffs of our fellows; alone we are hunted and hounded thro dark courts and alleys, in by-ways and highways; alone we stand in the judgment seat; alone in the prison cell we lament our crimes and misfortunes; alone we expiate them on the gallows. In hours like these we realize the awful solitude of individual life, its pains, its penalties, its responsibilities; hours in which the youngest and most helpless are thrown on their own resources for guidance and consolation. Seeing then that life must ever be a march and a battle, that each soldier must be equipped for his own protection, it is the height of cruelty to rob the individual of a single natural right.

To throw obstacle in the way of a complete education is like putting out the eyes; to deny the rights of property, like cutting off the hands. To deny political equality is to rob the ostracised of all self-respect; of credit in the market place; of recompense in the world of work; of a voice among those who make and administer the law; a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment. Shakespeare's play of Titus and Andronicus contains a terrible satire on woman's position in the nineteenth century-"Rude men" (the play tells us) "seized the king's daughter, cut out her tongue, out off her hands, and then bade her go call for water and wash her hands." What a picture of woman's position. Robbed of her natural rights, handicapped by law and custom at every turn, yet compelled to fight her own battles, and in the emergencies of life to fall back on herself for protection.

The girl of sixteen, thrown on the world to support herself, to make her own place in society, to resist the temptations that surround her and maintain a spotless integrity, must do all this by native force or superior education. She does not acquire this power by being trained to trust others and distrust herself. If she wearies of the struggle, finding it hard work to swim upstream, and allow herself to drift with the current, she will find plenty of company, but not one to share her misery in the hour of her deepest humiliation. If she tried to retrieve her position, to conceal the past, her life is hedged about with fears last willing hands should tear the veil from what she fain would hide. Young and friendless, she knows the bitter solitude of self.

How the little courtesies of life on the surface of society, deemed so important from man towards woman, fade into utter insignificance in view of the deeper tragedies in which she must play her part alone, where no human aid is possible.

The youngwife and mother, at the head of some establishment with a kind husband to shield her from the adverse winds of life, with wealth, fortune and position, has a certain harbor of safety, occurs against the ordinary ills of life. But to manage a household, have a deatrabale influence in society, keep her friends and the affections of her husband, train her children and servants well, she must have rare common sense, wisdom, diplomacy, and a knowledge of human nature. To do all this she needs the cardinal virtues and the strong points of character that the most successful stateman possesses.

An uneducated woman, trained to dependence, with no resources in herself must make a failure of any position in life. But society says women do not need a knowledge of the world, the liberal training that experience in public life must give, all the advantages of collegiate education; but when for the lock of all this, the woman's happiness is wrecked, alone she bears her humiliation; and the attitude of the weak and the ignorant is indeed pitiful in the wild chase for the price of life they are ground to powder.

In age, when the pleasures of youth are passed, children grown up, married and gone, the hurry and hustle of life in a measure over, when the hands are weary of active service, when the old armchair and the fireside are the chosen resorts, then men and women alike must fall back on their own resources. If they cannot find companionship in books, if they have no interest in the vital questions of the hour, no interest in watching the consummation of reforms, with which they might have been identified, they soon pass into their dotage. The more fully the faculties of the mind are developed and kept in use, the longer the period of vigor and active interest in all around us continues. If from a lifelong participation in public affairs a woman feels responsible for the laws regulating our system of education, the discipline of our jails and prisons, the sanitary conditions of our private homes, public buildings, and thoroughfares, an interest in commerce, finance, our foreign relations, in any or all of these questions, here solitude will at least be respectable, and she will not be driven to gossip or scandal for entertainment.

The chief reason for opening to every soul the doors to the whole round of human duties and pleasures is the individual development thus attained, the resources thus provided under all circumstances to mitigate the solitude that at times must come to everyone. I once asked Prince Krapotkin, the Russian nihilist, how he endured his long years in prison, deprived of books, pen, ink, and paper. "Ah," he said, "I thought out many questions in which I had a deep interest. In the pursuit of an idea I took no note of time. When tired of solving knotty problems I recited all the beautiful passages in prose or verse I have ever learned. I became acquainted with myself and my own resources. I had a world of my own, a vast empire, that no Russian jailor or Czar could invade." Such is the value of liberal thought and broad culture when shut off from all human companionship, bringing comfort and sunshine within even the four walls of a prison cell.

As women of times share a similar fate, should they not have all the consolation that the most liberal education can give? Their suffering in the prisons of St. Petersburg; in the long, weary marches to Siberia, and in the mines, working side by side with men, surely call for all the self-support that the most exalted sentiments of heroism can give. When suddenly roused at midnight, with the startling cry of "fire! fire!" to find the house over their heads in flames, do women wait for men to point the way to safety? And are the men, equally bewildered and half suffocated with smoke, in a position to more than try to save themselves?

At such times the most timid women have shown a courage and heroism in saving their husbands and children that has surprise everybody. Inasmuch, then, as woman shares equally the joys and sorrows of time and eternity, is it not the height of presumption in man to propose to represent her at the ballot box on the throne of grace, do her voting in the state, her praying in the church, and to assume the position of priest at the family altar.

Nothing strengthens the judgment and quickens the conscience like individual responsibility. Nothing adds such dignity to character as the recognition of one's self-sovereignty; the right to an equal place, every where conceded; a place earned by personal merit, not an artificial attainment, by inheritance, wealth, family, and position. Seeing, then that the responsibilities of life rests equally on man and woman, that their destiny is the same, they need the same preparation for time and eternity. The talk of sheltering woman from the fierce sterns of life is the sheerest mockery, for they beat on her from every point of the compass, just as they do on man, and with more fatal results, for he has been trained to protect himself, to resist, to conquer. Such are the facts in human experience, the responsibilities of individual. Rich and poor, intelligent and ignorant, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious, man and woman, it is ever the same, each soul must depend wholly on itself.

Whatever the theories may be of woman's dependence on man, in the supreme moments of her life he can not bear her burdens. Alone she goes to the gates of death to give life to every man that is born into the world. No one can share her fears, no one mitigate her pangs; and if her sorrow is greater than she can bear, alone she passes beyond the gates into the vast unknown.

From the mountain tops of Judea, long ago, a heavenly voice bade His disciples, "Bear ye one another's burdens," but humanity has not yet risen to that point of self-sacrifice, and if ever so willing, how few the burdens are that one soul can bear for another. In the highways of Palestine; in prayer and fasting on the solitary mountain top; in the Garden of Gethsemane; before the judgment seat of Pilate; betrayed by one of His trusted disciples at His last supper; in His agonies on the cross, even Jesus of Nazareth, in these last sad days on earth, felt the awful solitude of self. Deserted by man, in agony he cries, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" And so it ever must be in the conflicting scenes of life, on the long weary march, each one walks alone. We may have many friends, love, kindness, sympathy and charity to smooth our pathway in everyday life, but in the tragedies and triumphs of human experience each moral stands alone.

But when all artificial trammels are removed, and women are recognized as individuals, responsible for their own environments, thoroughly educated for all the positions in life they may be called to fill; with all the resources in themselves that liberal thought and broad culture can give; guided by their own conscience and judgment; trained to self-protection by a healthy development of the muscular system and skill in the use of weapons of defense, and stimulated to self-support by the knowledge of the business world and the pleasure that pecuniary independence must ever give; when women are trained in this way they will, in a measure, be fitted for those hours of solitude that come alike to all, whether prepared or otherwise. As in our extremity we must depend on ourselves, the dictates of wisdom point of complete individual development.

In talking of education how shallow the argument that each class must be educated for the special work it proposed to do, and all those faculties not needed in this special walk must lie dormant and utterly wither for want of use, when, perhaps, these will be the very faculties needed in life's greatest emergencies. Some say, Where is the use of drilling series in the languages, the Sciences, in law, medicine, theology? As wives, mothers, housekeepers, cooks, they need a different curriculum from boys who are to fill all positions. The chief cooks in our great hotels and ocean steamers are men. In large cities men run the bakeries; they make our bread, cake and pies. They manage the laundries; they are now considered our best milliners and dressmakers. Because some men fill these departments of usefulness, shall we regulate the curriculum in Harvard and Yale to their present necessities? If not why this talk in our best colleges of a curriculum for girls who are crowding into the trades and professions; teachers in all our public schools rapidly filling many lucrative and honorable positions in life? They are showing too, their calmness and courage in the most trying hours of human experience.

You have probably all read in the daily papers of the terrible storm in the Bay of Biscay when a tidal wave such havoc on the shore, wrecking vessels, unroofing houses and carrying destruction everywhere. Among other buildings the woman's prison was demolished. Those who escaped saw men struggling to reach the shore. They promptly by clasping hands made a chain of themselves and pushed out into the sea, again and again, at the risk of their lives until they had brought six men to shore, carried them to a shelter, and did all in their power for their comfort and protection.

What especial school of training could have prepared these women for this sublime moment of their lives. In times like this humanity rises above all college curriculums and recognises Nature as the greatest of all teachers in the hour of danger and death. Women are already the equals of men in the

whole of realm of thought, in art, science, literature, and government. With telescope vision they explore the starry firmament, and bring back the history of the planetary world. With chart and compass they pilot ships across the mighty deep, and with skillful finger send electric messages around the globe. In galleries of art the beauties of nature and the virtues of humanity are immortalized by them on their canvas and by their inspired touch dull blocks of marble are transformed into angels of light.

In music they speak again the language of Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, and are worthy interpreters of their great thoughts. The poetry and novels of the century are theirs, and they have touched the keynote of reform in religion, politics, and social life. They fill the editor's and professor's chair, and plead at the bar of justice, walk the wards of the hospital, and speak from the pulpit and the platform; such is the type of womanhood that an enlightened public sentiment welcomes today, and such the triumph of the facts of life over the false theories of the past.

Is it, then, consistent to hold the developed woman of this day within the same narrow political limits as the dame with the spinning wheel and knitting needle occupied in the past? No! no! Machinery has taken the labors of woman as well as man on its tireless shoulders; the loom and the spinning wheel are but dreams of the past; the pen, the brush, the easel, the chisel, have taken their places, while the hopes and ambitions of women are essentially changed.

We see reason sufficient in the outer conditions of human being for individual liberty and development, but when we consider the self dependence of every human soul we see the need of courage, judgment, and the exercise of every faculty of mind and body, strengthened and developed by use, in woman as well as man.

Whatever may be said of man's protecting power in ordinary conditions, amid all the terrible disasters by land and sea, in the supreme moments of danger, alone, woman must ever meet the horrors of the situation; the Angel of Death even makes no royal pathway for her. Man's love and sympathy enter only into the sunshine of our lives. In that solemn solitude of self, that links us with the immeasurable and the eternal, each soul lives alone forever. A recent writer says:

I remember once, in crossing the Atlantic, to have gone upon the deck of the ship at midnight, when a dense black cloud enveloped the sky, and the great deep was roaring madly under the lashes of demoniac winds. My feelings were not of danger or fear (which is a base surrender of the immortal soul), but of utter desolation and loneliness; a little speck of life shut in by a tremendous darkness. Again I remember to have climbed the slopes of the Swiss Alps, up beyond the point where vegetation ceases, and the stunted conifers no longer struggle against the unfeeling blasts. Around me lay a huge confusion of rocks, out of which the gigantic ice peaks shot into the measureless blue of the heavens, and again my only feeling was the awful solitude.

And yet, there is a solitude, which each and every one of us has always carried with him, more inaccessible than the ice-cold mountains, more profound than the midnight sea; the solitude of self. Our inner being, which we call ourself, no eye nor touch of man or angel has ever pierced. It is more hidden than the caves of the gnome; the sacred adytum of the oracle; the hidden chamber of eleusinian mystery, for to it only omniscience is permitted to enter.

Such is individual life. Who, I ask you, can take, dare take, on himself the rights, the duties, the responsibilities of another human soul?

This work was published before January 1, 1924, and is in the public domain worldwide because the author died at least 100 years ago.

MY COUNTRY

Project Gutenberg's *The Witch-Maid and other verses*, by Dorothea Mackellar

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins;
Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies--
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains;
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror--
The wide brown land for me!

The tragic ring-barked forests
Stark white beneath the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree tops
And ferns the crimson soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us
We see the cattle die--
But then the grey clouds gather
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the Rainbow Gold,
For flood and fire and famine
She pays us back threefold
Over the thirsty paddocks,

Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land--
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand--
Though earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly.

AUSTRALIA.

Pojken

Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige

av Selma Lagerlöf

(Chapter 1 of Nils Holgerssons' wonderful journey through Sweden

by Selma Lagerlöf)

I.

POJKEN.

TOMTEN.Söndag 20 mars.

Det var en gång en pojke. Han var så där en fjorton år gammal, lång och ranglig och linhårig. Inte stort dugde han till: han hade mest av allt lust att sova och äta, och därnäst tyckte han om att ställa till odygd.

Nu var det en söndagsmorgon, och pojkens föräldrar höllo på att göra sig i ordning för att gå i kyrkan. Pojken själv satt i skjortärmarna på bordskanten och tänkte på hur lyckligt det var, att både far och mor gingo sin väg, så att han skulle få rå sig själv under ett par timmar. »Nu kan jag då ta ner fars bössa och skjuta av ett skott, utan att någon behöver lägga sig i det,» sade han för sig själv.

Men det var nästan, som om far skulle ha gissat sig till pojkens tankar, för just som han stod på tröskeln och var färdig att gå, stannade han och vände sig mot honom. »Eftersom du inte vill gå i kyrkan med mor och mig,» sade han, »så tycker jag, att du åtminstone kan läsa predikan hemma. Vill du lova, att du gör det?»

»Ja,» sade pojken, »det kan jag väl göra.» Och han tänkte förstås, att inte skulle han läsa mer, än han hade lust till.

Pojken tyckte, att han aldrig hade sett mor så fortfärdig. I ett nu var hon borta vid vägghyllan, tog ner Luthers postilla och lade den på bordet framme vid fönstret med dagens predikan uppslagen. Hon slog också upp i [10]evangelieboken och lade den bredvid postillan. Sist drog hon fram till bordet den stora

länstolen, som blev köpt på auktionen i Vemmenhögs prästgård förra året, och där eljest ingen annan än far fick sitta.

Pojken satt och tänkte, att mor gjorde sig alltför mycket besvär med den där uppdukningen, för han ämnade inte läsa mer än en eller annan sida. Men nu var det för andra gången alldeles så, som om far skulle ha kunnat se tvärsigenom honom. Han gick fram till pojken och sade med sträng röst: »Kom nu ihåg, att du läser ordentligt! För när vi kommer tillbaka, ska jag förhöra dig på varenda sida, och har du då hoppat över någon, så går det inte väl för dig.»

»Predikan är fjorton och en halv sida,» sade mor liksom för att råga måttet. »Du får nog sätta dig att läsa genast, om du ska hinna igenom den.»

Därmed gingo de äntligen, och då pojken stod i dörren och såg efter dem, tyckte han, att han hade blivit fångad i en fälla. »Nu går de nog och lyckönskar sig till att ha hittat på det så bra, att jag måste sitta och hänga över predikan hela tiden, som de är borta,» tänkte han.

Men far och mor gingo visst inte och lyckönskade sig till något, utan i stället voro de ganska bedrövade. De voro ett fattigt husmansfolk, och deras ställe var inte mycket större än en trädgårdstappa. Då de först flyttade dit, kunde där inte födas mer än en gris och ett par höns, men de voro ovanligt strävsamma och duktiga människor, och nu hade de både kor och gäss. Det hade gått ofantligt framåt för dem, och de skulle ha vandrat nöjda och glada till kyrkan den vackra morgonen, om de inte hade haft sonen att tänka på. Far klagade över att han var trög och lat: ingenting hade han velat lära i skolan, och han var så oduglig, att man nätt och jämnt kunde sätta honom till att valla gäss. Och mor nekade inte till att detta var sant, men hon var mest bedrövad över att han var vild och elak, hård mot djur och illvillig mot människor. »Måtte [11]Gud bryta hans ondska och ge honom ett annat sinnelag!» sade mor. »Annars blir han till en olycka för både sig själv och oss.»

Pojken stod en lång stund och funderade om han skulle läsa predikan eller inte. Men så kom han överens med sig själv, att den här gången var det bäst att vara lydig. Han satte sig i prästgårdslänstolen och började läsa. Men då han hade hållit på en stund med att rabbla upp orden halvhögt, så var det, som om det där mumlandet skulle ha sövt honom, och han märkte, att han nickade till.

Ute var det allra vackraste vårväder. Året var inte längre kommet än till den tjugonde mars, men pojken bodde i Västra Vemmenhögs socken långt nere i södra Skåne, och där var våren redan i full gång. Det var inte grönt än, men det var friskt och knoppande. Det fanns vatten i alla diken, och hästhovsörten stod i blom på dikeskanten. Allt det krattet, som växte på stengårdsgården, hade blivit brunt och blankt. Bokskogen långt borta stod och liksom svällde och blev tätare för varje ögonblick. Himmelen var hög och rent blå. Stugdörren stod på glänt, så att det hördes in i rummet hur lärkorna drillade. Hönsen och gässen gingo på gården, och korna, som kände vårluften ända in i båsen, gåvo ibland till ett råmande.

Pojken han läste och nickade och stred mot sömnen. »Nej, jag vill inte somna,» tänkte han, »för då hinner jag inte igenom det här på hela förmiddagen.»

Men hur det var, så somnade han.

Han visste inte om han hade sovit litet eller länge, men han vaknade vid att han hörde ett lätt buller bakom sig.

På själva fönsterbrädet rätt framför pojken stod en liten spegel, och i den syntes nästan hela rummet. I

detsamma som nu pojken lyfte huvudet, råkade han titta i spegeln, och då såg han, att locket till mors kista hade blivit uppslaget.

Det var så, att mor ägde en stor, tung, järnbeslagen ekkista, som ingen annan än hon själv fick öppna. Där [12]förvarade mor allt det, som hon hade ärvt efter sin mor, och som hon var särskilt rädd om. Där lågo ett par gammaldags bondkvinnedräkter av rött kläde med kort liv och veckad kjol och pärlbesatt bröstsmäck. Där funnos stärkta, vita huvudklutar och tunga silversöljor och kedjor. Folk ville inte gå med sådant nu för tiden, och mor hade flera gånger tänkt på att göra sig av med de gamla sakerna, men så hade hon inte haft hjärta till det.

Nu såg pojken i spegeln alldeles tydligt, att locket till kistan stod öppet. Han kunde inte förstå hur detta hade gått till, för mor hade stängt kistan, innan hon gick. Det skulle nog inte ha hänt mor, att hon hade lämnat den kistan öppen, när han var ensam hemma.

Han blev riktigt hemsk till mods. Han var rädd för att en tjuv hade smugit sig in i stugan. Han vågade inte röra sig, utan satt stilla och stirrade i spegeln.

Medan han satt så och väntade, att tjuven skulle visa sig, började han undra vad det var för en svart skugga, som föll över kistkanten. Han såg och såg och ville inte tro sina ögon. Men det där, som till en början var skugglikt, blev allt tydligare, och snart märkte han, att det var något verkligt. Det var inte bättre, det, än att en tomte satt och red grensle över kistkanten.

Pojken hade nog hört talas om tomtar, men han hade aldrig tänkt sig, att de kunde vara så små. Han var inte mer än en tvärhand hög, han, som satt på kistkanten. Han hade ett gammalt, rynkigt, skägglöst ansikte och var klädd i svart långrock, knäbyxor och bredskyggig, svart hatt. Han var mycket prydlig och fin med vita spetsar kring halsen och handlederna, spännen i skorna och strumpeband, knutna i rosetter. Han hade tagit upp ur kistan en broderad smäck och satt och såg på det gammaldags arbetet med sådan andakt, att han inte märkte, att pojken hade vaknat.

Pojken blev bra förvånad att få se tomten, men så särdeles rädd blev han däremot inte. Det var omöjligt [13]att bli rädd för en, som var så liten. Och eftersom tomten satt där så upptagen av sitt, att han varken såg eller hörde, tänkte pojken, att det skulle vara lustigt att spela honom ett spratt: knuffa ner honom i kistan och slå igen locket över honom eller något i den vägen.

Men pojken var ändå inte så modig, att han vågade röra vid tomten med händerna, utan han såg sig om i stugan efter något, som han kunde stöta till honom med. Han lät blickarna vandra från liggsoffan till slagbordet och från slagbordet till spisen. Han såg på grytorna och kaffepannan, som stodo på en hylla bredvid spisen, på vattenspannen vid dörren och på slevar och knivar och gafflar och fat och tallrikar, som syntes genom den halvöppna skåpdörren. Han såg upp till fars bössa, som hängde på väggen bredvid de danska kungligas porträtt, och på pelargonierna och fuksiorna, som blommade i fönstret. Allra sist föllo hans blickar på en gammal flughåv, som hängde på fönsterkarmen.

Knappast hade han fått syn på flughåven, förrän han ryckte den till sig och sprang upp och svängde den utmed kistkanten. Och han blev själv förvånad över en sådan tur, som han hade. Han förstod nästan inte hur han hade burit sig åt, men han hade verkligen fångat tomten. Den stackaren låg på botten av den långa håven med huvudet neråt och kunde inte komma upp ur den.

I första ögonblicket visste pojken alls inte vad han skulle ta sig till med sin fångst. Han var bara noga med att svänga håven fram och tillbaka, för att inte tomten skulle få rådum att klättra upp.

Tomten började tala och bad så innerligt att bli frigiven. Han hade gjort dem gott under många år, sade han, och var värd bättre medfart. Om nu pojken släppte lös honom, så skulle han ge honom en gammal speciedaler, en silversked och en guldpennning, som var lika stor som boetten på hans fars silverur.

Pojken tyckte inte, att detta var mycket bjudet, men [14]det hade gått honom så, att sedan han hade fått tomten i sitt våld, hade han blivit rädd för honom. Han märkte, att han hade gett sig i lag med något, som var främmande och hemskt och inte hörde hans värld till, och han var bara glad att bli av med otyget.

Han gick därför genast in på köpet och höll håven stilla, för att tomten skulle kunna krypa ut ur den. Men när tomten nästan var ute ur håven, kom pojken att tänka på att han borde ha betingat sig stora ägodelar och allt möjligt gott. Åtminstone borde han då ha ställt upp det villkoret, att tomten skulle ha trollat predikan in i huvudet på honom. »Så dum jag var, som gav honom fri!» tänkte han och började skaka håven, för att tomten skulle ramla ner igen.

Men i samma stund, som pojken gjorde detta, fick han en så förfärlig örfil, att han trodde huvudet skulle springa i bitar. Han for först mot ena väggen, sedan mot den andra, till sist sjönk han ner på golvet, och där blev han liggande sanslös.

Då han vaknade upp igen, var han ensam i stugan. Han såg inte till ett spår efter tomten. Kistlocket var stängt, och flughåven hängde på sin vanliga plats i fönstret. Om han inte hade känt hur högra kinden brände efter örfilen, skulle han ha varit frestad att tro, att det hade varit en dröm alltsammans. »Hur som helst så lär väl far och mor påstå, att det inte har varit annat,» tänkte han. »De kommer nog inte att göra något avdrag i predikan för tomtens skull. Det är bäst jag sätter mig att läsa igen.»

Men när han nu gick fram mot bordet, så lade han märke till något underligt. Det kunde ju inte vara så, att stugan hade vuxit. Men varav kom det sig då, att han måste gå så många fler steg, än han brukade, för att komma fram till bordet? Och vad gick det åt stolen? Den såg inte ut att vara större nu än nyss förut, men han måste först stiga upp på slån mellan stolbenen och sedan klättra för att nå till sitsen. Och på samma sätt var det med [15]bordet. Han kunde inte se över bordskivan utan att kliva upp på armstödet.

»Vad i all världen är detta?» sade pojken. »Jag menar tomten har förgjort både länstolen och bordet och hela stugan.»

Postillan låg på bordet, och synbarligen var den sig lik, men det måtte ha varit något galet med den också, för han kunde inte komma åt att läsa ett ord i den utan att rent av ställa sig i själva boken.

Han läste ett par rader, men så råkade han att se upp. Därvid föllo hans blickar i spegeln, och då ropade han helt högt: »Se, där är ju en till!»

För i spegeln såg han tydligt en liten, liten parvel, som var klädd i toppluva och skinnbyxor.

»Den där är ju klädd alldeles som jag,» sade pojken och slog ihop händerna av förvåning. Men då såg han, att parveln i spegeln gjorde detsamma.

Då började han att dra sig i håret och nypa sig i armarna och svänga sig runt, och ögonblickligen gjorde han efter det, han, som syntes i spegeln.

Pojken sprang omkring spegeln ett par gånger för att se efter om det stod någon liten karl gömd bakom den. Men han fann ingen där, och då började han skälva av skräck. Ty nu förstod han, att tomten hade förtrollat honom, och att den där parveln, som han såg bilden av i spegeln, det var han själv.

VILDGÄSSEN.

Pojken kunde rakt inte förmå sig att tro, att han hade blivit förvandlad till tomte. »Det är väl bara en dröm och en inbillning,» tänkte han. »Om jag väntar ett par ögonblick, så blir jag nog människa igen.»

Han ställde sig framför spegeln och slöt ögonen. Han öppnade dem först efter ett par minuter och väntade då, att det skulle ha gått över. Men det hade det inte, utan [16]han var och förblev lika liten. Eljest var han alldeles sådan, som han hade varit förut. Det vita linhåret och fräknarna över näsan och lapparna på skinnbyxorna och stoppen på strumpan, alltsammans var sig likt, med undantag av att det hade blivit förminskat.

Nej, det tjänade ingenting till att stå stilla och vänta, det märkte han. Han fick lov att försöka med något annat. Och det klokaste, han kunde företa sig, tyckte han skulle vara att leta reda på tomten och försona sig med honom.

Han hoppade ner på golvet och började söka. Han tittade bakom stolar och skåp och under liggsoffan och i bakugnen. Han kröp till och med ner i ett par råtthål, men han var inte i stånd att finna tomten.

Medan han sökte, grät han och bad och lovade allt tänkbart. Aldrig mer skulle han svika sitt ord till någon, aldrig mer skulle han vara elak, aldrig mer skulle han somna ifrån predikan. Om han bara finge bli människa igen, så skulle det bli en så präktig och snäll och lydig gosse av honom. Men vad han än lovade, så hjälpte det inte det minsta.

Med ens kom han ihåg, att han hade hört mor säga, att småfolket brukade bo i kostallet, och han beslöt genast att gå dit och se om han kunde finna tomten. Det var en lycka, att stugdörren stod på glänt, för han skulle inte ha kunnat nå upp till låset och öppna den, men nu slapp han igenom utan hinder.

Då han kom ut i förstun, såg han sig om efter sina träskor, för inne i rummet hade han förstås gått i strumpsockorna. Han undrade hur han skulle reda sig med de stora, klumpiga träskorna, men i detsamma såg han ett par små skor stå på tröskeln. När han märkte, att tomten hade varit så omtänksam, att han också hade förvandlat träskorna, blev han ännu mer ängslig. Det tycktes, som om det vore meningen, att den här bedrävelsen skulle räcka länge.

På den gamla ekbrädan, som låg framför förstudörren,[bild]

[-][17]hoppade en gråsparv. Han hade inte väl fått ögonen på pojken, förrän han ropade: »Tititt! Tititt! Se på Nils gåsapåg! Se på Tummetott! Se på Nils Holgersson Tummetott!«

Genast vände både gässen och hönsen sina blickar mot pojken, och det blev ett förfärligt kacklande. »Kukeliku,» gol tuppen, »det var rätt åt honom. Kukeliku, han har ryckt mig i kammen.» — »Ka, ka, ka, det var rätt åt honom,» ropade hönorna, och härmed höllo de på i oändlighet. Gässen foro ihop i en tät klunga, stucko huvudena tillsammans och frågade: »Vem kan ha gjort det? Vem kan ha gjort det?»

Men det märkvärdigaste härvid var, att pojken förstod vad de sade. Han var så förvånad, att han blev stående stilla på trappsteget och lyssnade. »Det måtte komma sig därav, att jag är förvandlad till tomte,» sade han. »Det är nog därför, som jag förstår fåglalåt.»

Han tyckte, att det var odrägligt, att hönsen inte ville sluta upp att säga, att det var rätt åt honom. Han kastade en sten mot dem och ropade: »Tig med er, ert pack!»

Men han hade inte tänkt på att han inte mer var sådan, att hönsen behövde vara rädda för honom. Hela hönshopen rusade emot honom, ställde sig runt omkring honom och skrek: »Ka, ka, ka, det var rätt åt dig. Ka, ka, ka, det var rätt åt dig.»

Pojken försökte komma undan dem, men hönsen sprungo efter och skreko, så att han höll på att mista hörseln. Han hade väl aldrig sluppit ifrån dem, om inte stugkatten hade kommit gående. Så snart hönsen sågo katten, tystnade de och låtsade inte tänka på annat än att krasa i jorden efter mask.

Pojken sprang genast fram till katten. »Kära du Misse,» sade han, »du känner väl till alla vrår och smyghål här på gården? Du får vara snäll och tala om för mig var jag kan finna tomten.»

Katten svarade inte genast. Han satte sig ner, lade svansen prydligt i ring framför benen och stirrade på pojken. [18]Det var en stor, svart katt med en vit fläck i bringan. Håret låg slätt och blänkte i solskenet. Klorna voro indragna, och ögonen voro jämngråa med bara en liten, smal springa mittpå. Katten såg genombeskedlig ut.

»Nog vet jag var tomten bor,» sade han med len röst, »men inte är det sagt, att jag vill tala om det för dig.»

»Kära Misse, du får lov att hjälpa mig,» sade pojken. »Ser du inte hur han har förtrollat mig?»

Katten öppnade litet på ögonen, så att den gröna elakheten började lysa fram. Han spann och surrade av belåtenhet, innan han svarade. »Ska jag kanske hjälpa dig, för det att du så ofta har ryckt mig i svansen?» sade han till sist.

Då blev pojken ond och glömde alldeles hur liten och maktlös han nu var. »Jag kan allt rycka dig i svansen än en gång, jag,» sade han och sprang emot katten.

I nästa ögonblick var katten så förändrad, att pojken knappt kunde tro, att det var samma djur. Vartenda hår på hans kropp stod på ända. Ryggen hade krökt sig, benen hade långt sig, klorna skrapade i marken, svansen hade blivit kort och tjock, öronen lade sig bakåt, munnen fräste, ögonen stodo vidöppna och lyste av röd eld.

Pojken ville inte låta skrämman sig av en katt, utan tog än ett steg framåt. Men då gjorde katten ett språng, kom ner rätt på pojken, slog omkull honom och ställde sig över honom med framfötterna på hans bröst och gapet öppet över hans strupe.

Pojken kände hur klorna trängde genom västen och skjortan in i skinnet och hur de vassa hörntänderna kittlade strupen. Han skrek på hjälp, allt vad han förmådde.

Men ingen kom, och han trodde förvisso, att hans sista stund var inne. Då kände han, att katten drog in

klorna och släppte taget om strupen.

»Så där,» sade han, »nu kan det vara nog. Jag ska låta dig slippa undan den här gången för matmors skull. [19]Jag ville bara, att du skulle veta vem av oss två det är, som nu har makten.»

Därmed gick katten sin väg och såg lika slät och from ut som nyss, när han kom. Pojken var så skamsen, att han inte sade ett ord, utan bara skyndade till kostallet för att söka efter tomten.

Där funnos inte fler än tre kor. Men när pojken kom in, blev det ett bölande och ett oväsen, så att man gott kunde tro, att de voro åtminstone trettio.

»Mu, mu, mu,» råmade Majros. »Det är då gott, att det finns rättvisa till i världen.»

»Mu, mu, mu,» stämde de upp alla tre. Han kunde inte höra vad de sade, så skreko de över varandra.

Pojken ville fråga efter tomten, men han kunde inte göra sig hörd, därför att korna voro i fullt uppror. De buro sig åt så, som de brukade, när han släppte en främmande hund in till dem. De sparkade med bakbenen, skakade i sina halslänkar, vände huvudena utåt och måttade med hornen.

»Kom hit du bara,» sade Majros, »så ska du få dig en spark, som du inte ska glömma på länge!»

»Kom hit,» sade Gull-Lilja, »så ska du få dansa på mina horn!»

»Kom hit, så ska du få känna på hur det smakade, när du slängde på mig träskon, som du brukade göra i somras!» röt Stjärna.

»Kom hit, så ska du få betalt för getingen, som du släppte in i örat på mig!» vrålade Gull-Lilja.

Majros var den äldsta och klokaste av dem, och hon var allra ondast. »Kom hit,» sade hon, »så att jag får ge dig betalt för alla de gånger, som du har ryckt mjölkpallen undan mor din, och för alla de krokben, som du har satt för henne, när hon har kommit bärande med mjölkspannen, och för alla de tårar, som hon har stått här och gråtit över dig!»

[20]Pojken ville säga dem, att han ångrade, att han hade varit stygg mot dem, och att han aldrig skulle bli annat än snäll, om de bara sade honom var tomten fanns. Men korna lyssnade inte till honom. De bråkade så, att han blev rädd för att någon av dem skulle lyckas slita sig lös, och han tyckte, att det var bäst att smyga sig bort ur kostallet.

Då han kom ut igen, var han rätt modlös. Han kunde förstå, att ingen på gården ville hjälpa honom att finna tomten. Och litet skulle det väl också båta, om han funne honom.

Han kröp upp på den breda stengårdsgården, som gick runt omkring torpet och var övervuxen med törne och björnbärsrankor. Där slog han sig ner för att tänka på hur det skulle gå, om han inte bleve människa igen. När nu far och mor komme hem ifrån kyrkan, skulle det väl bli ett undrande. Ja, ett undrande skulle det bli över hela landet, och folk skulle komma både från Östra Vemmenhög och från Torp och från Skurup; från hela Vemmenhögs härad skulle man komma för att titta på honom. Och kanske far och mor skulle ta honom med sig och visa honom på Kiviks marknad.

Nej, det var förskräckligt att tänka på. Han ville helst, att aldrig mer någon människa skulle få se

honom.

Det var förfärligt vad han var olycklig. Ingen i hela världen var så olycklig som han. Han var inte en människa mer, utan ett vidunder.

Han började så småningom begripa vad det hade att betyda, att han inte mer var någon människa. Han var skild från allting nu: inte kunde han leka med andra pojkar, inte kunde han överta torpet efter föräldrarna, och rakt inte kunde han få någon tös att gifta sig med.

Han satt och såg på sitt hem. Det var ett litet, vitmenat korsvirkeshus och låg som nertryckt i marken under det höga, branta halmtaket. Uthusen voro också små, och åkerlapparna voro så smala, att en häst knappast kunde vända sig på dem. Men så litet och fattigt, som stället [21]var, så var det nu alldeles för gott för honom. Han kunde inte begära bättre bostad än en håla under stallgolvet.

Det var förunderligt vackert väder. Det porlade, och det knoppades, och det kvittrade runt omkring honom. Men han satt i så tung sorg. Han skulle aldrig mer bli glad åt något.

Han hade aldrig sett himmelen så blå som i dag. Och flyttfåglar kom det farande. De kommo från utlandet och hade rest över Östersjön, styrande rätt mot Smygehuk, och nu voro de på väg norrut. De voro visst av många olika slag, men han kände inte igen några andra än vildgässen, som kommo flygande i två långa rader, som möttes i en vinkel.

Flera vildgåsfloccar hade redan farit förbi. De flögo högt uppe, men han hörde ändå hur de skreko: »Nu bär det till fjälls. Nu bär det till fjälls.»

Då vildgässen sågo tamgässen, som gingo på gården, sänkte de sig mot jorden och ropade: »Kom med! Kom med! Nu bär det till fjälls.»

Tamgässen kunde inte låta bli att sträcka upp huvudena och lyssna. Men de svarade helt förståndigt: »Vi har det bra, som vi har det. Vi har det bra, som vi har det.»

Det var, som sagt, en ofantligt vacker dag med en luft, som det måtte ha varit en sann glädje att flyga i, så frisk och så lätt. Och för varje ny vildgåsflocc, som flög förbi, blevo tamgässen alltmer oroliga. Ett par gånger flaxade de med vingarna, som om de skulle ha haft lust att följa med. Men då sade alltid en gammal gåsamor: »Var nu inte galna! De där får både hungra och frysa.»

Det var en ung gåskarl, som vildgässens rop hade gett en riktig reslust. »Kommer det en flocc till, så följer jag med,» sade han.

Så kom en ny flocc och skrek som de andra. Då svarade den unga gåskarlen: »Vänta! Vänta! Jag kommer.»

Han bredde ut vingarna och höjde sig i luften, men han var så ovan att flyga, att han föll ner till marken igen.

[22]Vildgässen måtte i alla fall ha hört hans rop. De vände om och flögo sakta tillbaka för att se om han skulle komma.

»Vänta! Vänta!» ropade han och gjorde ett nytt försök.

Allt detta hörde pojken, där han låg på gårdsgården. »Det vore bra stor skada,» tänkte han, »om den stora gåskarlén skulle fara sin väg. Det skulle bli en sorg för far och mor, om han vore borta, när de kommer hem från kyrkan.»

Då han tänkte på detta, glömde han åter alldeles, att han var liten och vanmäktig. Han tog ett språng rätt ner i gåsflocken och slog armarna om halsen på gåskarlén. »Du låter allt bli att flyga din väg, du,» ropade han.

Men just i detsamma hade gåskarlén kommit underfund med hur han skulle bära sig åt för att höja sig från marken. Han kunde inte hejda sig för att skaka av pojken, utan denne fick följa med upp i luften.

Det bar av mot höjden så fort, att pojken hisnade. Innan han kom att tänka på att han borde släppa taget om gåskarléns hals, var han så högt uppe, att han skulle ha slagit ihjäl sig, om han hade fallit till marken.

Det enda han kunde göra för att få det något bättre var att försöka komma upp på gåsryggen. Och dit krånglade han sig också, fast inte utan stor möda. Och inte var det en lätt sak heller att hålla sig kvar på den glatta ryggen mellan de två svängande vingarna. Han fick gripa djupt ner i fjäder och dun med båda händerna för att inte ramla i backen.

DET RUTIGA TYGSTYCKET.

Pojken blev så huvudyr, att han inte visste till sig på en lång stund. Luften ven och väste emot honom, vingarna svingade, och det brusade i fjädrarna som en hel storm. Tretton gäss flögo omkring honom. Alla flaxade och kacklade. Det dansade för hans ögon, och det susade [23] för hans öron. Han visste inte om de flögo högt eller lågt, eller vart det bar av med dem.

Äntligen kom han så mycket till sans, att han förstod, att han borde taga reda på vart gässen förde honom. Men detta var inte så lätt, för han visste inte hur han skulle få mod att se ner. Han var alldeles säker på att han skulle få svindel, om han försökte.

Vildgässen foro inte så särdeles högt, därför att den nykomna reskamraten inte kunde andas i den allra tunnaste luften. För hans skull flögo de också litet långsammare än vanligt.

Till sist tvang pojken sig ändå att kasta en blick åt jorden till. Då tyckte han, att under honom låg utbredd en stor duk, som var indelad i en otrolig massa små och stora rutor.

»Vart i all världen är jag nu kommen?» undrade han.

Han såg ingenting annat än ruta vid ruta. Somliga voro sneda och somliga långsmala, men överallt var det hörn och raka kanter. Ingenting var runt, och ingenting var krokigt.

»Vad är det för ett stort, rutigt stycke tyg, som jag ser ner på?» sade pojken för sig själv utan att vänta, att någon skulle svara.

Men vildgässen, som flögo omkring honom, ropade genast: »Åkrar och ängar. Åkrar och ängar.»

Då förstod han, att det stora, rutiga tygstycket var den platta skånska jorden, som han for fram över. Och han började begripa varför den såg så mångfärgad och rutig ut. De klargröna rutorna kände han först igen: det var rågåkrarna, som hade blivit sådda förra hösten och hade hållit sig gröna under snön. De gulgråa rutorna voro stubbåkrar, där det förra sommaren hade vuxit säd, de brunaktiga voro gamla klövervallar, och de svarta voro tomma betland eller upplöjda trädesåkrar. De rutorna, som voro bruna med gula kanter, voro säkert bokskogar, för i sådana stå de stora träden, som växa mitt i skogen, [24] nakna om vintern, men småbokarna, som växa i skogsbrynet, behålla de torra, gulnade bladen ända till våren. Det fanns också mörka rutor med grått i mitten: det var de stora, kringbyggda gårdarna med de svartnade halmtaken och de stensatta gårdsplanerna. Och så fanns det rutor, som voro gröna i mitten och omgärdade med brunt: det var trädgårdarna, där gräsmattorna redan började grönska, fast buskarna och träden, som stodo omkring dem, ännu voro i nakna, bruna barken.

Pojken kunde inte låta bli att skratta, när han såg hur rutigt allting var.

Men när vildgässen hörde, att han skrattade, ropade de liksom bestraffande: »Fruktbart och gott land. Fruktbart och gott land.»

Pojken hade redan blivit allvarsam. »Att du kan skratta, du, som har råkat ut för det allra förskräckligaste, som kan hända en människa,» tänkte han.

Han höll sig allvarsam en stund, men snart kom han till att skratta igen.

Allt eftersom han hade blivit van vid ritten och farten, så att han kunde tänka på annat än att hålla sig kvar på gåsryggen, började han att lägga märke till hur full luften var av fågelflockar, som flögo norrut. Och det var ett hojtande och ett ropande från flock till flock. »Jaså, ni har kommit över i dag,» skreko somliga. — »Ja, vi har så,» svarade gässen. »Hur tror ni att det står till med våren?» — »Inte ett löv på träden och kallt vatten i sjöarna,» kom det till svar.

När gässen flögo fram över ett ställe, där det gick tamt fjäderfä ute, ropade de: »Vad heter gården? Vad heter gården?» Då sträckte tuppen upp huvudet och svarade: »Gården heter Lillgårde i år som i fjol, i år som i fjol.»

De flesta stugorna hade väl namn efter sina ägare, såsom det brukas i Skåne, men i stället för att svara, att detta var Per Matssons eller Ola Bossons, hittade tupparna på sådana namn, som de tyckte vara passande. De, som[bild]

Nils Holgersson band 1-Illustration 2.jpg

Tavla av Bruno Liljefors

Vildgäss.

[-] [25] bodde på fattiga torp och husmansställen, ropade: »Den här gården heter Grynlösa.» Och de, som hörde till de allra fattigaste, skreko: »Den här gården heter Tuggelite, Tuggelite, Tuggelite.»

De stora, välbärgade bondgårdarna fingo granna namn av tupparna, sådana som Lyckåker, Äggeberga och Penningby.

Men tupparna på herrgårdarna voro för högfärdiga att hitta på något skämtsamt. En av dem gol och ropade med en kraft, som om han ville höras ända upp till solen: »Detta är Dybecks herrgård. I år som i fjol. I år som i fjol.»

Och litet längre bort stod en, som ropade: »Detta är Svaneholm. Det måtte väl hela världen ha reda på.»

Pojken märkte, att gässen inte flögo sin väg rakt fram. De svävade hit och dit över hela Söderslätt, liksom voro de glada att vara i Skåne igen och ville hälsa på i varenda gård.

De kommo till ett ställe, där det stod några stora, tunga byggnader med höga skorstenar och runt omkring dessa en mängd mindre hus. »Detta är Jordberga sockerbruk,» ropade tupparna. »Detta är Jordberga sockerbruk.»

Pojken ryckte till, där han satt på gåsryggen. Han borde ju ha känt igen det här stället. Det låg inte långt från hans hem, och här hade han förra året haft plats som vaktarpåg. Men det var nog så, att ingenting var sig riktigt likt, när man såg det så där uppifrån.

Och tänk! Och tänk! Åsa gåsapiga och lille Mats, som voro hans kamrater i fjol! Pojken skulle allt ha velat veta om de gingo kvar här ännu. Vad skulle de ha sagt, om de hade anat, att han flög fram högt över deras huvuden?

Så förlorade de Jordberga ur sikte och foro bortöver åt Svedala och Skabersjö och tillbaka över Börringekloster och Häckeberga. Pojken fick se mer av Skåne på den enda dagen, än vad han hade sett förut under alla de år, han hade levat.

[26]När vildgässen råkade på tamgäss, hade de allra roligast. De flögo då fram helt sakta och ropade neråt: »Nu bär det till fjälls. Kommer ni med? Kommer ni med?»

Men tamgässen svarade: »Vintern är kvar i landet. Ni är för tidigt ute. Far tillbaks! Far tillbaks!»

Vildgässen sänkte sig, för att de skulle höras bättre, och ropade: »Kom med, så ska vi lära er att flyga och simma!»

Då blevo tamgässen förargade och svarade inte med ett enda kacklande.

Men vildgässen sänkte sig än mer, så att de nästan snuddade vid marken, och sedan höjde de sig så blixtnabbt, som om de hade blivit förfärligt skrämde. »Oj, oj, oj!» ropade de. »Det var inga gäss. Det var bara får. Det var bara får.»

De på marken blevo alldeles ursinniga och skreko: »Måtte ni bli skjutna, så många som ni ä', så många som ni ä'!»

När pojken hörde allt detta skämtande, skrattade han. Så kom han ihåg hur illa han hade det ställt för sig, och då grät han. Men om en liten stund skrattade han på nytt.

Aldrig förr hade han farit fram med så god fart, och att rida fort och vilt, det hade han alltid tyckt om. Och han hade förstås aldrig tänkt på att det kunde kännas så friskt, som det gjorde, uppe i luften, och att det steg upp från jorden en så god lukt av mylla och kåda. Och inte heller hade han tänkt på hur det kunde vara att färdas fram så där högt över jorden. Men det var liksom att flyga bort från bekymmer och sorger och förtretligheter av alla de slag, som tänkas kunde.

Edith Kingdon (1886)

Edith M. Kingdon (1864 - November 13, 1921) was the actress wife of George Jay Gould I (1864-1923).

The Daily Local News, Ottawa, Canada, October 15, 1886, page 2

Jay Gould, Railroad Tycoon, Visits the City of Ottawa. A Millionaires Appearance. "The Boy" George and His Bonny Bride

Not a solitary woman in this city was aware of the fact, until the Local-News appeared last night that Edith Kingdon, the actress, paid her first visit to Ottawa in her new role of Mrs. George J. Gould, yesterday afternoon. At twenty minutes past one in the afternoon, a special train consisting of the locomotive, a baggage car, a sleeper, a dining car and a regally decorated boudoir car arrived at the First street depot. The boudoir coach was the "Convoy," Jay Gould's personal car, and it brought to the city the railroad magnate, his son, George J. Gould, the latter's wife, pretty Edith Kingdon that was; H.S. Hopkins, second vice president of the Gould system; Capt. Shackford, commander of Gould's steam yacht the Atalanta, and officials of the M.P. system. Modesty cautions us not to mention that a Local-News reporter was also one of the party from the Osawatomie junction. The only other people on the car beside the trainmen, worthy of note were a conductor and a negro porter, who were duly impressed with the responsibilities of the positions they were occupying as menials to the great millionaire. The conductor was particularly enamored with himself and strutted about like a turkey gobler as the train halted here for twenty minutes, giving orders to every curious person who sought to gain a view of the glory of the interior of the car. Had it not been for his blue suit and brass buttons, the people would not doubt have taken him for the railroad magnate and Gould for the conductor. While waiting at the depot Messrs Gould and Hopkins engaged in conversation with station agent Lisk. The great railroad President has changed very little in the past few years. He still has the same sharp, black eye and his face wears its old time studious look. His full black beard has a considerable sprinkling of gray in it. He was dressed in a frock business suit of dark material, and wore a white crush - they call it "slouch" out here - hat, pulled down well over his forehead. George and his bride, who were greater objects of curiosity than the great financier, make quite a good looking couple. The young man is about twenty six years of age, somewhat taller than his father, but like him very slender. He has dark skin, jet black hair and moustache, and a dark brown eye. He wore a light frock suit of a small checked pattern, and a dark derby hat. While not exactly handsome, he is a rather a good looking young fellow, and has a very pleasant face. He walked about the platform, but was addressed by nobody. His wife looks enough like him to be taken for his sister. She is of a dark, olive complexion, and has a dark grey eye and dark hair. Her features are sharp and clean cut, and her mouth at times wears a pucker that is perfectly captivating. She can hardly be classed as a beauty, but is a certainly quite pretty, and has a most interesting and attractive face. Her tall, slender form was clad in a close fitting, neat tailor made traveling suit of dark blue woolen goods, ornamented with broad eroded trimmings. She donned a little black straw hat that was set off with a red wing and a bow of red ribbon as she stood upon the platform for a moment gazing with apparent interest at the little mill that is so great an eyesore to Supt. Leonard of the gas works, and carried in her hand a plain, wooden-handled red silk parasol. A foot that is not over small was encased in a low quartered shoe, just affording the slightest glimpse of a pretty ankle clad in black silk hose. To the representative of the press Mr. Gould, while courteous, showed little inclination to talk. The party, he said had been traveling the western roads controlled by him. There was no particular significance to the trip, it being a tour of inspection. His son was accompanying him on business also and had merely taken his bride along as she wanted to travel with him. Mr. Gould said he had no new pieces of railroad property in mind and contemplated no changes in the system. Vice President Hopkins was more talkative with respect to local interests. He manifested considerable

interest in Ottawa, as evinced by his pertinent enquiries as to the volume of business done here, and how much of it his road is receiving. When interrogated as to whether or not the city would be made the end of a division he rather gave the impression that it was hardly probable. However if a proper spirit was shown by citizens, and the M.P. met half way and treated fairly by citizens - the company would most certainly do its share and put its properties in first-class condition. He said that in all likelihood the Topeka extension would be built in the immediate future, and smilingly intimated that shops would very probably be erected here. The party went out to the front of the Council Grove extension, and will return this evening.

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Death Comes to Mata Hari (1917)

by Henry G. Wales

International News Service, October 19 1917: concerning the death of the spy Mata Hari

Mata Hari, which is Javanese for Eye-of-the-Morning, is dead.

She was shot as a spy by a firing squad of Zouaves at the Vincennes Barracks. She died facing death literally, for she refused to be blindfolded.

Gertrud Margarete Zelle, for that was the real name of the beautiful Dutch-Japanese dancer, did appeal to President Poincaré for a reprieve, but he refused to intervene.

The first intimation she received that her plea had been denied was when she was led at daybreak from her cell in the Saint-Lazare prison to a waiting automobile and then rushed to the barracks where the firing squad awaited her.

Never once had the iron will of the beautiful woman failed her. Father Arbaux, accompanied by two sisters of charity, Captain Bouchardon, and Maître Clunet, her lawyer, entered her cell, where she was still sleeping — a calm, untroubled sleep, it was remarked by the turnkeys and trustees.

The sisters gently shook her. She arose and was told that her hour had come.

"May I write two letters?" was all she asked.

Consent was given immediately by Captain Bouchardon, and pen, ink, paper and envelopes were given to her.

She seated herself at the edge of the bed and wrote the letters with feverish haste. She handed them over to the custody of her lawyer.

Then she drew on her stockings, black, silken, filmy things, grotesque in the circumstances. She placed

her high-heeled slippers on her feet and tied the silken ribbons over her insteps.

She arose and took the long black velvet cloak, edged around the bottom with fur and with a huge square fur collar hanging down the back, from a hook over the head of her bed. she placed this cloak over the heavy silk kimono which she had been wearing over her nightdress.

Her wealth of black hair was still coiled about her head in braids. She put on a large, flapping black felt hat with a black silk ribbon and bow. Slowly and indifferently, it seemed, she pulled on a pair of black kid gloves. Then she said calmly:

"I am ready."

The party slowly filed out of her cell to the waiting automobile.

The car sped through the heart of the sleeping city. It was scarcely half past five in the morning and the sun was not yet fully up.

Clear across Paris the car whirled the Caserne de Vincennes, the barracks of the old fort which the Germans stormed in 1870.

The troops were already drawn up for the execution. The twelve Zouaves, forming the firing squad, stood in line, their rifles at ease. A subofficer stood behind them, sword drawn.

The automobile stopped, and the party descended, Mata Hari last. The party walked straight to the spot, where a little hummock of earth reared itself seven or eight feet high and afforded a background for such bullets as might miss the human target.

As Father Arbaux spoke with the condemned woman, a French officer approached, carrying a white cloth.

"The blindfold," he whispered to the nuns who stood there and handed it to them.

"Must I wear that?" asked Mata hari, turning to her lawyer, as her eyes glimpsed the blindfold.

Maître Cluent turned interrogatively to the French officer.

"If Madame prefers not, it makes no difference," replied the officer, hurriedly turning away.

Mata Hari was not bound and she was not blindfolded. She stood gazing steadfastly at her executioners, when the priest, the nuns, and her lawyer stepped away from her.

The officer in command of the firing squad, who had been watching his men like a hawk that none might examine his rifle and try to find out whether he was destined to fire the blank cartridge which was in the breech of one rifle, seemed relieved that the business would soon be over.

A sharp, crackling command, and the file of twelve men assumed rigid positions at attention. Another command, and their rifles were at their shoulders; each man gazed down his barrel at the breast of the woman which was the target.

She did not move a muscle.

The underofficer in charge had moved to a position where from the corners of their eyes they could see him. His sword was extended in the air.

It dropped. The sun — by this time up — flashed on the burnished blade as it described an arc in falling. Simultaneously the sound of the volley rang out. Flame and a tiny puff of greyish smoke issued from the muzzle of each rifle. Automatically the men dropped their arms.

At the report Mata Hari fell. She did not die as actors and moving-picture stars would have us believe that people die when they are shot. She did not throw up her hands nor did she plunge straight forward or straight back.

Instead she seemed to collapse. Slowly, inertly, she settled to her knees, her head up always, and without the slightest change of expression on her face. For the fraction of a second it seemed she tottered there, on her knees, gazing directly at those who had taken her life. Then she fell backward, bending at the waist, with her legs doubled up beneath her. She lay prone, motionless, with her face turned towards the sky.

A non-commissioned officer, who accompanied a lieutenant, drew his revolver from the big, black holster strapped about his waist. Bending over, he placed the muzzle of the revolver almost - but not quite - against the left temple of the spy. He pulled the trigger, and the bullet tore into the brain of the woman.

Mata Hari was surely dead.

THE STORY OF MARIA LOUISE MOORE AND FANNIE M. RICHARDS[1]

by W. B. Hartgrove

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. I.

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The State of Virginia has been the home of distinguished persons of both sexes of the white and colored races. A dissertation on the noted colored women of Virginia would find a small circle of readers but would, nevertheless, contain interesting accounts of some of the most important achievements of the people of that State. The story of Maria Louise Moore-Richards would be a large chapter of such a narrative. She was born of white and Negro parentage in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1800. Her father was Edwin Moore, a Scotchman of Edinburgh. Her mother was a free woman of color, born in Toronto when it was called York. Exactly how they came to Fredericksburg is not known. It seems, however, that they had been well established in that city when Maria Louise Moore was born.

This woman was fortunate in coming into the world at that time. So general had been the efforts for the elevation of the colored people

that free Negroes had many of the privileges later given only to white people. Virginia then and for a long time thereafter ranked among the commonwealths most liberal toward the Negro. The dissemination of information among them was not then restricted, private teaching of slaves was common, and progressive communities maintained colored schools.[1a] In Fredericksburg such opportunities were not rare. The parents of Maria Louise Moore fortunately associated with the free Negroes who constituted an industrial class with adequate means to provide for the thorough training of their children. Miss Moore, therefore, easily acquired the rudiments of education and attained some distinction as a student of history.

In 1820 Miss Moore was married to Adolphe Richards, a native of the Island of Guadaloupe. He was a Latin of some Negro blood, had noble ancestry, and had led an honorable career. Educated in London and resident in Guadaloupe, he spoke both English and French fluently. Because of poor health in later years he was directed by his friends to the salubrious climate of Virginia. He settled at Fredericksburg, where he soon became captivated by the charms of the talented Maria Louise Moore. On learning of his marriage, his people and friends marveled that a man of his standing had married a colored woman or a Southern woman at all.

Adjusting himself to this new environment, Mr. Richards opened a shop for wood-turning, painting and glazing. It is highly probable that he learned these trades in the West Indies, but having adequate means to maintain himself, he had not depended on his mechanical skill. In Fredericksburg he had the respect and support of the best white people, passing as one of such well-to-do free Negroes as the Lees, the Cooks, the De Baptistes, who were contractors, and the Williamses, who were contractors and brickmakers. His success was in a large measure due to the good standing of the family of Mrs. Richards and to the wisdom with which she directed this West Indian in his new environment.

They had in all fourteen children, the training of whom was largely the work of the mother. All of them were well grounded in the rudiments of education and given a taste for higher things. In the course of time when the family grew larger the task of educating them grew more arduous. Some of them probably attended the school conducted by a Scotch-Irishman in the home of Richard De Baptiste. When the reaction against the teaching of Negroes effected the closing of the colored schools in Virginia, this one continued clandestinely for many years. Determined to have her children better educated, Mrs. Richards sent one of her sons to a school conducted by Mrs. Beecham, a remarkable English woman, assisted by her daughter. These women were bent on doing what they could to evade the law interpreted as prohibiting any one from either sitting or standing to teach a black to read. They, therefore, gathered the colored children around them while they lay prostrate on the couch to teach them. For further evasion they kept on hand splinters

of wood which they had the children dip into a match preparation and use with a flint for ignition to make it appear that they were showing them how to make matches. When this scheme seemed impracticable, one of the boys was sent to Washington in the District of Columbia to attend the school maintained by John F. Cook, a successful educator and founder of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. This young man was then running the risk of expatriation, for Virginia had in 1838 passed a law, prohibiting the return to that State of those Negroes, who after the prohibition of their education had begun to attend schools in other parts.[2]

It was because of these conditions that in 1851 when her husband died Mrs. Richards sold out her property and set out to find a better home in Detroit, Michigan. Some of the best white people of Fredericksburg commended her for this step, saying that she was too respectable a woman to suffer such humiliation as the reaction had entailed upon persons of her race.[3] She was followed by practically all of the best free Negroes of Fredericksburg. Among these were the Lees, the Cooks, the Williamses and the De Baptistes. A few years later this group attracted the Pelham family from Petersburg. They too had tired of seeing their rights gradually taken away and, therefore, transplanted themselves to Detroit.

The attitude of the people of Detroit toward immigrating Negroes had been reflected by the position the people of that section had taken from the time of the earliest settlements. Slavery was prohibited by the Ordinance of 1787. In 1807 there arose a case in which a woman was required to answer for the possession of two slaves. Her contention was that they were slaves on British territory at the time of the surrender of the post in 1796 and that Jay's Treaty assured them to her. Her contention was sustained.[4] A few days later a resident of Canada attempted under this ruling to secure the arrest and return of some mulatto and Indian slaves who had escaped from Canada. The court held that slavery did not exist in Michigan except in the case of slaves in the possession of the British settlers within the Northwest Territory July 11, 1796, and that there was no obligation to give up fugitives from a foreign jurisdiction. An effort was made to take the slaves by force but the agent of the owner was tarred and feathered.[4]

Generally speaking, Detroit adhered to this position.[4a] In 1827 there was passed an act providing for the registry of the names of all colored persons, requiring the possession of a certificate showing that they were free and a bond in the sum of \$500 for their good behavior.[5] This law was obnoxious to the growing sentiment of freedom in Detroit and was not enforced until the Riot of 1833. This uprising was an attack on the Negroes because a courageous group of them had effected the rescue and escape of one Thornton Blackburn and his wife, who had been arrested by the sheriff as alleged fugitives from Kentucky.[6] The anti-slavery feeling considerably increased thereafter. The Detroit Anti-Slavery

Society was formed in 1837, other societies to secure the relief and escape of slaves quickly followed and still another was organized to find employment and purchase homes for refugees.[7] This change of sentiment is further evidenced by the fact that in 1850 it was necessary to call out the three companies of volunteers to quell an incipient riot occasioned by the arrest and attempt to return a runaway slave in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Law. Save the general troubles incident to the draft riots of the Northern cities of 1863,[8] Detroit maintained this benevolent attitude toward Negroes seeking refuge.

In this favorable community the Richards colony easily prospered. The Lees well established themselves in their Northern homes and soon won the respect of the community. Most of the members of the Williams family confined themselves to their trade of bricklaying and amassed considerable wealth. One of Mr. Williams's daughters married a well-to-do Waring living then at Wauseon, Ohio; another became the wife of one Chappée, who is now a stenographer in Detroit; and the third united in matrimony with James H. Cole, who became the head of a well-to-do family of Detroit. Then there were the Cooks descending from Lomax B. Cook, a broker of no little business ability. Will Marion Cook, the musician, belongs to this family. The De Baptistes, too, were among the first to get a foothold in this new environment and prospered materially from their experience and knowledge acquired in Fredericksburg as contractors.[8a] From this group came Richard De Baptiste, who in his day was the most noted colored Baptist preacher in the Northwest. The Pelhams were no less successful in establishing themselves in the economic world. They enjoyed a high reputation in the community and had the sympathy and cooperation of the influential white people in the city. Out of this family came Robert A. Pelham, for years editor of a weekly in Detroit, and from 1901 to the present time an employee of the Federal Government in Washington.[9]

The children of Mrs. Richards were in no sense inferior to the descendants of the other families. She lived to see her work bear fruit in the distinguished services they rendered and the desirable connections which they made after the Civil War. Her daughter Julia married Thomas F. Carey who, after conducting a business for some years in New York, moved to Toronto, where he died. From this union came the wife of D. Augustus Straker. Her daughter Evalina married Dr. Joseph Ferguson who, prior to 1861, lived in Richmond, Virginia, uniting the three occupations of leecher, cupper and barber. This led to his coming to Detroit to study medicine. He was graduated there and practiced for many years in that city. Before the Civil War her son John D. Richards was sent to Richmond to learn a trade. There he met and became the lifelong friend of Judge George L. Ruffin, who was then living in that city.[10]

The most prominent and the most useful person to emerge from this group of pioneering Negroes was her daughter Fannie M. Richards. She was born

in Fredericksburg, Virginia, October 1, 1841. As her people left that State when she was quite young she did not see so much of the intolerable conditions as did the older members of the family. Miss Richards was successful in getting an early start in education. Desiring to have better training than what was then given to persons of color in Detroit, she went to Toronto. There she studied English, history, drawing and needlework. In later years she attended the Teachers Training School in Detroit. Her first thought was to take up teaching that she might do something to elevate her people. She, therefore, opened a private school in 1863, doing a higher grade of work than that then undertaken in the public schools. About 1862, however, a colored public school had been opened by a white man named Whitbeck. Miss Richards began to think that she should have such a school herself.

Her story as to how she realized her ambition is very interesting. Going to her private school one morning, she saw a carpenter repairing a building. Upon inquiry she learned that it was to be opened as Colored School Number 2. She went immediately to William D. Wilkins, a member of the board of education, who, impressed with the personality of the young woman, escorted her to the office of superintendent of schools, Duane Doty. After some discussion of the matter Miss Richards filed an application, assured that she would be notified to take the next examination. At the appointed time she presented herself along with several other applicants who hoped to obtain the position. Miss Richards ranked highest and was notified to report for duty the following September. Early one morning she proceeded to her private school in time to inform her forty pupils of the desirable change and conducted them in a body to their new home.

Miss Richards taught in this building until 1871, when by a liberal interpretation of the courts, the schools were mixed by ignoring race distinction wherever it occurred in the school laws of Michigan. She was then transferred to the Everett School where she remained until last June when she was retired on a pension after having served that system half a century. Although she taught very few colored children she said to a reporter several years ago:

"I have never been made to feel in any way that my race has been a handicap to me. Neither my pupils nor the teachers have ever shown prejudice; I do not doubt that it exists; I shall be in Heaven long before it has all disappeared, but I say it is with a colored teacher as it is with a white one. Her work is the only thing that counts. I have never been called before the board for a reprimand in all my years of teaching. The methods have changed a good deal since the time that I started in and it would be easy to lag behind, but I try not to. It means continual reading and study to keep up with the modern way of doing things, but I manage to do it, and when the time comes that I cannot do my work in a satisfactory manner I want the Board of Education to discharge me and get some one else."

In testimony to these facts one of the daily papers of Detroit wrote her up in 1910, saying that she had kept her interest in modern pedagogic methods, maintained a high standard of scholarship in her school, and retained her sympathy with little children, who had rewarded her devotion to her work with their appreciation and love. To show how well she is loved by her pupils the writer was careful to state that these children as a gay group often surrounded her on her way to school, clinging to her hands, crowding about her as best they may, all chattering and pouring out accounts of their little doings.

"Frequently," says this writer, "she is stopped on the street by grown men and women who long ago were her pupils and who have remembered her, though with the passing of the years, and the new classes of little ones who come to her every term, she has forgotten them." [11] Many have been accustomed to bring their children to the Everett School and speak of how glad they will be when these little ones will be under the care of their parents' former teacher.

Miss Richards estimates that in the years of school work, she has had in her room an average of fifty pupils a term, although sometimes the attendance overflowed to a much greater number. With eighty-eight terms of teaching to her credit, the number of pupils who owe part of their education to "this gentle and cultured woman" amounts well up into the tens of thousands, enough to populate a fair-sized city.

We can not close this article with a better testimonial than the following letter from one of her former pupils, the Honorable Charles T. Wilkins, a lawyer and an influential white citizen, who addressed her on the occasion of her retirement last June.

"_My dear Miss Richards_: The friendship of so long standing between your family and mine, and the high esteem in which, as an educator, a woman, and a Christian, you were always held by my father the late Colonel William D. Wilkins, lead me to take the liberty of writing to _congratulate_ you upon the well-earned retirement from active work, which I have just learned from the press that you contemplate after so many years well spent in faithful service to our community. As a citizen and one who has always been most interested in the education of our youth, I wish to add my thanks to those which are felt, if not expressed by the many who know of your devotion to and success in leading the young in the way in which they should go.

"Though your active participation in this work is about to cease, may you long be spared as an example to those who follow you is the earnest hope of

"Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

(Signed) "Charles T. Wilkins"

FOOTNOTES:

[1] For many of the facts set forth in this article the writer is indebted to Miss Fannie M. Richards, Robert A. Pelham, and C. G. Woodson.

[1a] Woodson, The Ed. of the Negro Prior to 1861, pp. 92, 217, 218.

[2] The law was as follows: Be it enacted by the General Assembly that if any free person of color, whether infant or adult, shall go or be sent or carried beyond the limits of this Commonwealth for the purpose of being educated, he or she shall be deemed to have emigrated from the State and it shall not be lawful for him or her to return to the same; and if any such person shall return within the limits of the State contrary to the provisions of this act, he or she being an infant shall be bound out as an apprentice until the age of 21 years, by the overseers of the poor of the county or corporation where he or she may be, and at the expiration of that period, shall be sent out of the State agreeably to the provisions of the laws now in force, or which may hereafter be enacted to prohibit the migration of free persons of color to this State; and if such person be an adult, he or she shall be sent in like manner out of the Commonwealth; and if any persons having been so sent off, shall hereafter return within the State, he or she so offending shall be dealt with and punished in the same manner as is or may be prescribed by law in relating to other persons of color returning to the State after having been sent therefrom. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1838, p. 76.

[3] The following enactments of the Virginia General Assembly will give a better idea of the extent of this humiliation:

4. Be it further enacted that all meetings of free Negroes or mulattoes at any school house, church, meeting-house or other place for teaching them reading or writing, either in the day or night, under whatsoever pretext, shall be deemed and considered as an unlawful assembly; and any justice of the county or corporation, wherein such assemblage shall be, either from his own knowledge, or on the information of others, of such unlawful assemblage or meeting, shall issue his warrant directed to any sworn officer or officers, authorizing him or them to enter the house or houses where such unlawful assemblage or meeting may be, for the purpose of apprehending or dispersing such free Negroes or mulattoes and to inflict corporal punishment on the offender or offenders at the discretion of any justice of the peace, not exceeding 20 lashes.

5. Be it further enacted that if any white person or persons

assemble with free Negroes or mulattoes, at any school house, church, meeting-house, or other place for the purpose of instructing such free Negroes or mulattoes to read or write, such person or persons shall, on conviction thereof, be fined in a sum not exceeding fifty dollars, and moreover may be imprisoned at the discretion not exceeding two months.

6. Be it further enacted that if any white persons for pay or compensation, shall assemble with any slaves for the purpose of teaching and shall teach any slave to read or write, such persons or any white person or persons contracting with such teacher so to act, who shall offend as aforesaid, shall for each offence, be fined at the discretion of a jury in a sum not less than ten nor exceeding one hundred dollars, to be recovered on an information or indictment. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1831, p. 107.

I. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia that no slave, free Negro or mulatto, whether he shall have been ordained or licensed or otherwise, shall hereafter undertake to preach, exhort or conduct or hold any assembly or meeting, for religious or other purposes, either in the day time or at night; and any slave, free Negro or mulatto so offending shall for every such offence be punished with stripes at the discretion of any justice of the peace, not exceeding 39 lashes; and any person desiring so to do, shall have authority without any previous written precept or otherwise, to apprehend any such offender and carry him before such justice.

II. Any slave, free Negro or mulatto who shall hereafter attend any preaching, meeting or other assembly, held or pretended to be held for religious purposes, or other instruction, conducted by any slave, free Negro or mulatto preacher, ordained or otherwise; any slave who shall hereafter attend any preaching in the night time although conducted by a white minister, without a written permission from his or her owner, overseer or master or agent of either of them, shall be punished by stripes at the discretion of any justice of the peace, not exceeding 39 lashes, and may for that purpose be apprehended by any person, without any written or other precept:

Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to prevent the master or owner of slaves or any white person to whom any free Negro or mulatto is bound, or in whose employment, or on whose plantation or lot such free Negro or mulatto lives, from carrying or permitting any such slave, free Negro or mulatto, to go with him, her or them, or with any part of his, her, or their white family to any place of worship, conducted by a white minister in the night time: And provided also, That nothing in this or any former law, shall be construed as to prevent any ordained or licensed white minister of the gospel, or any layman licensed for that purpose by the denomination to which he may belong, from preaching or giving

religious instruction to slaves, free Negroes and mulattoes in the day time; nor to deprive any masters or owners of slaves of the right to engage, or employ any free white person whom they think proper to give religious instruction to their slaves; nor to prevent the assembling of slaves of any one owner or master together at any time for religious devotion. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1831-1832, pp. 20-21.

[4] Campbell, Political History of Michigan, 246.

[4a] Slavery did not immediately cease, however. The number of slaves in the vicinity of Detroit in 1773 were ninety-six; 127 in 1778; and 175 in 1783. Detroit had a colored population of 15 in 1805 and two years later a number had sufficiently increased for Governor Hull to organize a company of militia among them. The increase had been due to the coming of refugees from Canada. The Census of 1810 showed 17 slaves in Detroit; that of 1830 shows 32 in Michigan and an enumeration subsequent to 1836 shows that all were dead or manumitted. See Census of the United States.

[5] Laws of Michigan, 1827.

[6] This riot occurred on June 14, 1833. Thornton Blackburn and his wife, the alleged runaways from Kentucky, were lodged in jail pending the departure of a boat. A crowd of colored men and women, armed with clubs, stones and pistols, gathered in the vicinity of the jail. Upon the pretext of visiting Blackburn's wife a colored woman was admitted to the jail and by an exchange of clothing effected the escape of the prisoner who immediately crossed into Canada. Some time thereafter the sheriff attempted to take his other prisoner to the boat, but was knocked down and badly beaten. During the encounter the sheriff fired into the mob, but Blackburn was rescued and carried to Canada. This caused a great disturbance among the white people. They armed themselves and attacked the blacks wherever they could be found. The city council convened and undertook to dispose of the trouble by enforcing the law of 1827 requiring that colored people should stay off the streets at night. Utley, Byron and McCutcheon, "Michigan as a Province and State," II, 347.

[7] Five years after the organization of the Detroit Anti-Slavery Society Henry Bibb, an ex-slave, came to the city and lectured for two years under the auspices of the Liberty Association, which was promoting the election of anti-slavery candidates. Public sentiment against slavery was becoming such that the Legislature of Michigan passed a law prohibiting the use of jails to detain fugitives. Frederick Douglass and John Brown found many friends of their cause in Detroit. Of the many organized efforts made to circumvent the law and assist fugitives one society purchased land and established homes for as many as 50 families between 1850 and 1872. Farmer, "History of Detroit and Michigan," I, Chapter XLVIII.

[8] The immediate cause of the riot in Detroit was the arrest, conviction, and imprisonment of a colored man called William Faulkner charged with committing an assault on a little girl. Feeling that the prisoner was guilty, bands of ruffians swept through the streets and mercilessly beat colored people. Seven years later it was discovered that Faulkner was innocent and to reimburse him for his losses and humiliation the same ruffians raised a handsome sum to set him up in business. See Farmer's History of Detroit and Michigan, Chapter XLVIII.

[8a] A study of the directories of Detroit shows that a considerable number of Negroes had entered the higher pursuits of labor. See especially the Detroit Directory for 1865.

[9] Simmons, "Men of Mark," 356.

[10] In 1853 Judge Ruffin moved with his parents from Richmond to Boston, where he became judge of the Charleston District. Simmons, "Men of Mark," 469.

[11] This information was obtained from newspaper clippings in the possession of Miss Fannie M. Richards.

ETCHINGS: JEANNETTE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Short Stories, March 1891*, by Various (French of George Le Faure: I. S: For Short Stories.)

Every day there came down to the long stone wharf a smiling fair-haired girl of seven, followed by an old, old man.

The child carried a spy-glass, hugging it in her arms as if it were a doll, and she skipped along gaily till she reached the end of the pier. Then she handed the long glass to her companion, and resting her chubby little hands on the cold stone coping, looked wistfully out to sea.

With the soft breeze blowing her hair about her shoulders, and her eyes fixed searchingly on the horizon she stood perfectly silent until a tiny white speck appeared in the far distance where sea and sky seemed to mingle.

"A sail, a sail!" she cried, and the old man sat down and laid the spy-glass upon his arm.

Breathless and eager, the child grasped the brass tube with both hands and peered through it without speaking. After a few minutes, however,

she said with a sigh of disappointment: “Not yet, grandpa,” and returning patiently to her post resumed the watch until another sail appeared.

This was kept up hour after hour, and when the sun, a golden ball, had slipped behind the rising billows, and a soft mist rose from the sea, the child turned round, her little face saddened, and walked away slowly at the old man’s side.

One day I spoke to an old sailor and asked about the child.

“That is Jeannette,” he said, taking his short clay pipe out of his mouth, “her father was killed eighteen months ago; the mast of his boat fell on him, and since the day his body was carried home, she has never been the same. She does not think that he is dead, and every afternoon her grandfather has to bring her down here to watch for him.”

He tapped his head expressively, and, as a merry laugh sounded, a smile of tenderness softened his rugged features.

I looked up and saw Jeannette coming as usual, carrying the telescope, and skipping gleefully before the old man.

“How sad, how sad!” I murmured with a sigh, but the old sailor shook his head; putting his pipe into his mouth hastily he puffed out a cloud of smoke to hide the tears that had gathered in his eyes, and answered softly--“God is good. She will never know, and so she will never cease to hope.”

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